Governor at 16
Meet our youngest governor and hear what she has to say about mental health

In the limelight
Lincoln service users film their own feature length movies

Archway Centre
Flagship health centre is open for business

Terry Pratchett
Discworld author pledges £500,000 to fight Alzheimer’s

WIN A FANTASTIC MP3 PLAYER AND SPEAKERS
Discworld author pledges £500,000 to fight Alzheimer’s

Alzheimer’s disease sufferer and best-selling author Terry Pratchett has pledged almost half a million pounds for research into the condition.

Terry is the creator of the Discworld series of comedic fantasy novels and was diagnosed with a rare early-onset form of the disease in December last year. He announced the donation of approximately £500,000 at the Alzheimer’s Research Trust annual conference.

Alzheimer’s disease is the most common cause of dementia, and is a degenerative and terminal disease for which there is currently no known cure.

According to the Alzheimer’s Research Trust, in Lincolnshire 7.14 per cent of over 65’s have dementia - that’s approximately 9,600 people.

Terry has a rare form of Alzheimer’s called posterior cortical atrophy, in which areas at the back of the brain begin to shrink and shrivel.

Terry said: “I intend to scream and harangue while there is time. I am, along with many others, scrabbling to stay ahead long enough to be there when the cure comes along.

“Say it will be soon – there’s nearly as many of us as there are cancer sufferers, and it looks as if the number of people with dementia will double within a generation. In most cases, alongside the sufferer you will find a spouse suffering as much.”

Rebecca Wood, Chief Executive of the Alzheimer’s Research Trust, said: “Whilst we were deeply saddened to learn of Mr Pratchett’s diagnosis, we are delighted that he has chosen to speak out about his experiences with Alzheimer’s disease, to raise awareness about its impact and the desperate need for more research.

“Research is the only way to beat this disease and help people like Terry – to prevent them losing their thinking skills and keep them doing the things they love. Terry’s generous donation will fund promising UK research which hopes to find ways to slow down or halt the disease.”

To find out more about Alzheimer’s disease, turn to the Mental Health Fact File on the back page.

Photos of Terry Pratchett are courtesy of the Alzheimer’s Research Trust.
Breakfast Club brings home the bacon

Older service users at Witham Court in Lincoln have been starting the day right by getting busy in the kitchen. The Breakfast Club is organised by Occupational Therapist Carol Rogers and Occupational Therapy Technical Instructor Kate Cockett to help service users maintain their independence by preparing and clearing up after their own breakfasts. Running every Tuesday and Thursday morning, the club provides a supportive environment that encourages people to keep up their practical skills and helps to improve confidence and motivation among people who may not be as independent as they once were.

Witham Court provides in-patient and community support for people aged 65 years or older who are experiencing mental health difficulties. The Breakfast Club is just one part of the great work being done at Witham Court that has led to it being awarded Practice Development Unit (PDU) accreditation. To achieve this, members of staff have had to demonstrate strong leadership, strategic awareness, creative problem solving and effective team and partnership working.

Other initiatives that have helped the unit achieve the award include telephone cover on reception after 4.30pm with admin staff taking turns to stay late to ensure phones are answered, the streamlining of ward rounds to make them more efficient, and the setting up of a network that enables Community Support Workers to assist each other and discuss common themes in their work.

Mark Challinor, Team Leader for Older Adults, said: “This is a fantastic achievement and one that all staff at Witham Court should be proud of. It is clear that there is an excellent sense of team spirit and camaraderie coupled with a genuine desire to promote and deliver excellent patient care. A solid foundation is now in place to move to Stage Two of the award.”

All in aid of Sport Relief

It was pedal power all the way at the Trust’s Francis Willis Unit in Lincoln as staff and service users hopped on their bikes to raise money for Sport Relief.

Pictured are (left to right) Sue Coles, Fitness Instructor, Marina Keel, Unit Secretary, Tracy Colpotts, Staff Nurse, Elaine Llewellyn, Dr Barczak’s Secretary, and Phil Mason, Occupational Therapist, who along with service users (pictured top right in their Sport Relief socks) each cycled a mile to raise almost £100 for charity.

Over at the Peter Hodgkinson Centre, Lincoln, staff and service users also pedalled for a mile to raise money. Walkers joined in the fun too, with people from both units taking part in a mile walk to raise money – collectively walking the same distance as Lincoln to Spilsby and back!
Almost half a million pounds has been pledged for a number of new posts to boost Lincolnshire mental health services in priority areas.

£427,000 of extra cash will mean the Trust can recruit another cognitive behavioural therapist to treat depression, two specialists to work with children who self-harm, a psychology assistant and occupational therapist for older people with dementia and two new nurse specialists within the Trust's eating disorders service.

The windfall has come about so that the Trust can implement new guidelines about treatment issued by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

Andy Skelton, the Trust's Acting Director of Nursing, said: “We are particularly pleased to receive this uplift on the back of NICE Guidance. It is always a challenge to keep up with the latest clinical evidence, and these monies give the Trust the opportunity to ensure that care delivered is in line with the latest thinking.”

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The birth of the NHS brings healthcare professionals together in one all encompassing organisation for the first time, to realise the aim of providing services that are free for all at the point of delivery.

Smoking is linked to cancer for the first time by the British scientist Sir Richard Doll.

The first heart transplant is carried out by South African-born surgeon Donald Ross at the National Heart Hospital in London.

NHS walk-in centres are introduced to offer easy access to a range of services.

Meanwhile, funding has also been provided for another new post who will be a specialist in psychosocial interventions working with people with serious mental health problems and their families. Psychosocial interventions are an approach that focuses on coping mechanisms. It allows the individual to understand more about their condition and to reduce stresses which may worsen the condition.

This will be a joint post with the Trust and the University of Lincoln. The specialist will join the Trust’s Assertive Outreach teams (who work with people who are difficult to engage in services), but will provide expert advice to other teams as well.

Four volunteers from the Order of St John Care Trust, which is a Lincolnshire-based not-for-profit organisation, regularly help out at the Manthorpe Centre in Grantham.

One of them, Jenny, has been volunteering for seven and a half years after responding to an advert in her local newspaper. She works with service users to bring out their crafting skills by helping them with card making.

Jenny said: “It is nice to see people enjoying themselves, and I love helping to keep them interested in things. Card making is a particularly good activity because cards are often sent to family members, which helps to reassure them that their loved one is keeping busy and not just sat about.”

A full time Activities Co-ordinator is employed at the Manthorpe Centre. Sharon Gutsell has been in post for three years, in a role created following Government advice that more activities were needed for older people.

Volunteering

KIND-HEARTED individuals who give up their time for free play a crucial role in providing support and friendship to people who use the Trust’s services.

Sharon said: “People can die from boredom. Volunteers provide support that I wouldn’t normally have and they help by showing service users that there are people who have the time to listen to them and work on activities with them.

“We have a range of activities such as cooking, trips out, gardening and massage, and volunteers are a hugely valuable part of my role.

“We don’t force people to take part in activities – it is entirely their choice – and we often find that even though someone may be reluctant at first, they do appreciate it once they are involved.”

If you are interested in finding out more about volunteering – which could be any kind of skill or service – please contact Voluntary Services Manager Rob Kendrick on 01529 301845.

Pictured left to right volunteer Jenny with Rose Kiernan from the Order of St John Care Trust.
The Department of Health’s Chief Nursing Officer paid a special visit to the Trust’s Long Leys Court learning disabilities unit in Lincoln.

Christine Beasley officially marked the site’s Practice Development Unit accreditation with a ribbon cutting and chatted with staff and service users.

Becoming a Practice Development Unit (PDU) is a two-year process of assessment against 15 set criteria that recognises the quality of service given to service users, as well as the skills and knowledge of members of staff.

Christine was appointed Chief Nursing Officer in October 2004 and is the Department of Health’s Director General for Professional Leadership and for Partnerships for Children, Families and Maternity. She is also the lead director for Reducing Health Associated Infections and the Cleaner Hospitals Programme.

Audrey Whelan, Matron/Manager for Learning Disabilities, said: “A lot of hard work and dedication has gone in to achieving Practice Development Unit status and we are delighted to have welcomed Christine to the unit to perform the official opening ceremony.

“This PDU award has allowed us to demonstrate the high standard of good practice there is at Long Leys Court, the level of expertise among staff and the efforts we take to engage with service users and encourage them to take an active role in their recovery.”

Long Leys Court is an assessment and treatment unit for adults with learning disabilities and associated healthcare needs that may include mental health issues, complex epilepsies and challenging behaviour primarily caused by deterioration in their physical or mental health.

Christine went on to meet representatives from United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust, Lincolnshire Teaching NHS Primary Care Trust and Lincolnshire County Council about the efforts being made locally to improve and maintain high standards of care.

Pictured from left to right are Natasha Pepperdine (front), Sue Garratt, Unit Manager, Catherine Keay, Nurse Lecturer/Practitioner, Chief Nursing Officer Christine Beasley, Audrey Whelan, Matron/Manager for Learning Disabilities, Andrew Rhoades and Alan Hornblow.

Are we involving you enough?

Foundation Trusts have a responsibility to involve members in having a say in how their services are developed.

At a recent time-out day, the Board of Governors debated ways in which they can find out about your views in order to represent them to the Trust.

Ideas included holding listening events for members to have their say on topical themes, arranging evening lectures on the latest thinking on mental health-related topics, holding open days, making Governor visits to units around the county, providing Governors’ surgeries - either through an internet forum, by email or in person - and carrying out surveys of your views.

What do you think? If you have any comments on these ideas or suggestions as to how the Governors might gather their constituents’ views, please do contact the Membership Office.

Please remember that if you have any questions or opinions you would like your Governor to raise with the Trust on your behalf, you can get in touch with them through the Membership Office. You could also attend a Board of Governors meeting (check Dates for your Diary on the back page for details).

Telephone 01522 515356, email info@lpt.nhs.uk or write to: The Membership Office, Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Cross O’Cliff Court, Bracebridge Heath, Lincoln. LN4 2HN.

If you are unsure who represents you on the Board of Governors, please contact Sam or Claire in the Membership Office or visit our website: www.lpt.nhs.uk
Cries of ‘Lights, Camera, Action!’ were heard around Lincoln as service users got to grips with shooting their very own feature-length movies.

The movies were part of the Trust’s annual GEMINI Project, which offers service users who have used the Occupational Therapy department at the Trust’s Peter Hodgkinson Centre, Lincoln, the opportunity to explore learning and creativity as students in a community-based, educational and supportive environment.

Service users worked with a film maker from the University of Lincoln and were able to generate ideas, direct their films and then edit them. Studying at the university provided a great opportunity for the group to develop creative film and video techniques. The films have been screened at Lincoln Central Library.

Terry Overton, Senior Technical Instructor and GEMINI Project organiser, said: “This opportunity has resulted in a rich variety of film work which has created such a positive response. Visitors to the exhibition were amazed at the quality of work on display.”

Pictured above, left to right, OT volunteer Kate Steane watching the film ‘The Lock Keeper’ by service user Moo, and the film the ‘The Lock Keeper’ preparation and artwork.

Night admissions to acute mental health wards in Lincolnshire have been vastly reduced thanks to a pioneering scheme that means there is someone on the end of a phone to offer advice in a crisis.

Service users, relatives and other healthcare professionals such as Accident and Emergency staff now have a single point of contact that means a hospital admission is not the only option at night any more.

The initiative, which has won national acclaim, involves an on-call rota manned by Crisis Resolution/Home Treatment Team nurses and a social worker. It operates at hospitals in Boston, Grantham and Lincoln outside normal working hours.

Service users are encouraged to contact the on-call team whenever they need support. The team provides an immediate response and will try to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

Staff have direct admission rights to a mental health ward, but also offer a range of alternatives depending on what the individual needs at the time.

Members of staff work with people aged 18 to 65 with a severe or enduring mental illness, as well as older adults and people with learning disabilities.

Acute Care Nurses Fiona Jackson (left) and Emma Britchford (right) are both part of the night triage team in the Department of Psychiatry, Pilgrim Hospital, Boston. The unit provides in-patient, out-patient and day hospital treatment for adults experiencing acute mental health problems. They work both on the ward and as part of the crisis team.

Fiona said: “The biggest impact that we’ve had since the night triage service was introduced is that people now have someone on the end of a telephone 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As well as signposting people to appropriate services, we also play an important role in providing support for service users and carers as well as being given advice to the hospital’s Accident and Emergency department.”

Emma added: “Home treatment is always the first option – it’s what most service users prefer - and we work with people until they are better or would be more suitably looked after by another service.

“The scheme also means that service users can get in touch with someone that they know. This familiarity really helps us to put people at ease and helps us to provide something more appropriate.”
The Trust can now count on support from above because the Bishop of Lincoln has put pen to paper and signed up as a member.

The Bishop – The Right Reverend Dr John Saxbee – signed up on a visit to the Trust’s Peter Hodgkinson Centre in Lincoln, which provides mental health in-patient, day hospital and out-patient services.

While at the centre he chatted with members of staff and service users and spoke about the need for first class mental health facilities in the county. He also took a tour of the building and popped into the art studio to create a clay leaf that will form part of a work of art that is being put together by service users.

Trust Chairman Alison Healey said: “We are honoured that the Bishop came to visit us and he was very complimentary about the Peter Hodgkinson Centre and the Trust as a whole. He really enjoyed his afternoon with us, and staff and service users were very pleased to meet him and spend time talking with him.

“We always welcome new members. People from all walks of life right across Lincolnshire have already signed up to become a member, but we always need more members so that we can have as many people’s views represented as possible.”

Membership Form

Almost 7,500 people are now members of Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, but we still need to make sure as many people as possible have the chance to join us.

In addition to 2,000 staff members the Trust is hoping to have over 7,000 public members by the end of this year, which will be the equivalent of one per cent of the population.

Please help us by encouraging friends, colleagues and family who haven’t already become members to join. They can fill out the form below or log-on to our website, where signing up will take a couple of minutes – www.lpt.nhs.uk.

Thank you.

Name
Address
Postcode
Tel number
Email
Male/Female
Date of birth (you must be 12 or over)

We need the following information so we can ensure we represent everyone in the community.

Ethnic group (please tick)
White British
White Irish
Other White
Black Caribbean
Black African
Other Black

Chinese
Asian/Indian
Asian/Pakistani
Asian/Bangladeshi
Other Asian
White & Black Caribbean
White & Black African
White & Asian
Other mixed background
Other ethnic group

I would like to be included as a:
Service user member
Carer member
Public member

Please tell us if you have any special communication needs:

Please return your membership form to:
Freepost RRCG-CBLE-LXTU
Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
Cross O’Cliff Court
Bracebridge Heath
Lincoln,
LN4 2HN

For further information, please telephone the Membership Office on 01522 515356 or email info@lpt.nhs.uk
The social care services the Trust provides on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council have been praised.

The report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) concluded that Lincolnshire County Council’s partnership working to deliver mental health services - primarily with the Trust - is “good”.

CSCI looks at the whole picture of social care in England. It regulates, inspects and reviews all social care services in the public, private and voluntary sectors in England, and gives a star rating to councils.

Leading minds come together

The leading minds in mental health in Lincolnshire gathered at the University of Lincoln to discuss the importance of building knowledge and what the future holds for research.

Organised by Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, the “Celebration of Mental Health Research in Lincolnshire” conference saw mental health professionals and academics coming together to discuss a variety of topics including psychology, child and family mental health and health services-related research methods.

Areas of research carried out over the past year have included whether child mental health cases are becoming more complex, attitudes towards death in people who self-harm or attempt suicide, and what service users think of the care they receive from the Trust’s community mental health teams.

Organiser Dianne Tetley, the Trust’s Research and Effectiveness Manager, said: “Research is vital to equip members of staff with new skills and knowledge, which in turn enables the Trust to provide first class care.

“Service users are at the heart of everything we do and by conducting research, working with other organisations on joint projects and looking to increase our level of knowledge we are better placed to do this.

“The Trust’s progress in research over the past year has been phenomenal and the day featured some lively debate about the research that people have been carrying out, the opportunities available and how we can move forward and develop our knowledge.”

Pictured left to right are Professor Ian Baguley of the University of Lincoln, Research and Effectiveness Manager Dianne Tetley and Dr Niro Siriwardena.

In the previous issue of Better Together, we brought you news of plans to build three new rehabilitation units on one site in Lincoln.

Outline planning permission has now been granted and the plans have been presented to the Trust’s commissioners Lincolnshire Teaching NHS Primary Care Trust for their consideration. Subject to approval of a viable business case, detailed planning work will then take place on the design, taking into consideration the views of service users, carers and local public.

REHAB DEVELOPMENT

On the move?

If you are moving, please contact the membership office with your change of address. Undelivered mail can cost the NHS money, so please don’t forget to let us know.
Flagship Health Centre is open for business

With its subtle entrance nestled among shops, cafés and travel agents, you could be forgiven for missing Lincolnshire’s newest mental health centre if you didn’t know it was there.

The Archway Centre - right in the heart of a new shopping and residential development off Outer Circle Road - has opened in Lincoln.

The Trust’s primary care mental health team and adult psychology specialty have now well and truly said goodbye to ageing premises at Beckside and Baverstock House respectively – and they couldn’t be happier with their new home.

The centre’s launch marks a new era in how mental health premises are planned, with the emphasis on providing them within the heart of the community, in non-stigmatising settings. With one in four people suffering from a mental health problem in their lifetime, seeing a mental health professional is commonplace, and the new strategy for the Trust’s premises reflects that.

Straddling the shopping mall’s main thoroughfare, the centre boasts no fewer than 17 counselling rooms behind its smart glass doors, a welcoming waiting area, a group therapy room and comfortable offices for the 30 staff based there.

As one team member put it: “We feel like we’re respecting our service users a lot more now by being able to see them here in this modern, clinically appropriate environment. There are also real, therapeutic benefits to where we are located.”
The proximity to the shopping centre means that when staff need to see how people respond to being in everyday situations, they only have to go out of the door.

Two smart staff kitchens, rest areas and plentiful car parking have also been a welcome benefit of the move.

Team Leader Caroline Coxon is responsible for the building. She said: “We’re really pleased with the new centre. Not only are the facilities fantastic, but psychological therapies and primary care staff are now based together, which is proving really helpful in terms of integrating the teams, providing leadership and professional development and ultimately helping us to provide a better service for patients.

“It’s a far cry from our previous premises, which were difficult to maintain, had problems with damp and weren’t situated in particularly accessible locations.”
Dignity and privacy have been the driving force behind a significant extension to Maple Lodge rehabilitation unit in Fishtoft, near Boston.

Five new bedrooms are now complete, meaning the unit now provides men-only and women-only areas, with separate private, en-suite bedrooms.

This brand new extension is part of a wider plan to modernise the Trust's rehabilitation services, which are for people who have long term and often complex mental illnesses.

The five new rooms come complete with a bed, bedroom furniture and an en-suite shower or bath. One room has been adapted for people with a physical disability, with features including a walk-in shower and a lower bed.

A full residential rehabilitation service is provided to support and enable the recovery of service users, as well as short term respite care for those who need it.

Sharon King, Head of Specialist Services at the Trust, said: “People can feel uncomfortable on mixed-sex wards and these five new bedrooms help us to treat them in an environment where they feel relaxed and at ease.

“The new wing helps to cement the Trust’s place at the forefront of mental healthcare and provides a first class rehabilitation unit for the county.”

People who are admitted to Maple Lodge have usually come from other hospital wards. They are likely to have had unusual or intense experiences and frightening thoughts for a period of time which may still worry them.

Each person’s experiences are different and can leave them with unwanted feelings or effects such as confusion, loss of control, lack of “get up and go”, fears about the future and difficulty trusting people.

The £900,000 funding to build this extension came from the Department of Health. It is also financing similar works at Ashley House in Grantham and Carholme Court in Lincoln.

The Trust’s Primary Care and Psychological Therapies Service is staging an open evening on Wednesday 25 June 2008 at the Archway Centre in Lincoln (featured on page 10).

Open to all Foundation Trust members, this event will provide an opportunity to look round their brand new clinical service and attend an informal presentation on “Self Help and Depression”.

The discussion will give an overview of what depression is, how it can affect people, and self help methods for tackling it when it starts.

Light refreshments will be available.

The open evening will run from 6pm to 7.30pm.

Spaces are limited, so please contact Sam Hackney in the membership office to book your place – 01522 515356.
The 60 second interview

With Ann Yeates-Langley, Carer Governor

Tell us about yourself

I’m a retired social worker and I lectured at North Lincolnshire College before retiring. Since then I’ve worked for two voluntary organisations (the advocacy service CALL and the British Red Cross).

How are you involved with the Trust?

Because I care for my son, I became involved with Rethink and they helped me to begin talking about him to family and friends. I had closed up even to them and people would ask about my daughter but not my son. I became part of the carers’ team with Rethink, visiting the Peter Hodgkinson Centre in Lincoln to offer advice, training and support to other carers. This has given me new found confidence and I wanted to continue my involvement with the Trust by becoming a carer governor.

When are you happiest?

When I’m walking my dog along the Fossdyke or the common.

What is your greatest fear?

Becoming older and incapable.

What is your earliest memory?

Going to see my father in a military hospital in Reading just after the War. I was about three and there’s a photo of me at the hospital.

If you could be another person for a day, who would it be?

The Prime Minister.

What’s the best thing about the NHS?

The good care and treatment it has provided for my family.

What’s the best way to celebrate a 60th birthday?

Well I have done this myself. I invited all the family and friends for a meal and then we went home and had a knees-up.

Stepping onto the stage in Lincoln

Service users with the Lincoln STEP (Support and Treatment in Early Psychosis) Team have caught the acting bug thanks to a series of drama and music workshops.

Senior Occupational Therapist Katie Greathead and Support Time Recovery Worker Patric Poole teamed up with performing arts students from Bishop Grosseteste College in Lincoln to stage weekly workshops encouraging participants to try out simple drama scenes and dance routines.

Katie Greathead said: “Everyone taking part had their own aims and objectives, whether that was making friends, building confidence or improving dancing ability or vocal skills. Above all, the aim was to have fun.

“Feedback from people involved has indicated that they are more confident with new things and coping in different situations.”

And the classes have proved a winner with students at the college, giving them a chance to work with people with mental health problems, while participants were able to enjoy access to higher education facilities.

The Trust’s STEP service works in the community with people aged between 14 and 35 who are experiencing psychosis for the first time, and family, friends, partners and employers if the person wishes.

The teams use techniques such as anxiety management, cognitive behavioural therapy, family work, medication, and education about psychotic experiences and staying well plans. They also support people to build towards their desired future by offering help with education, work and leisure activities.
We caught up with Emma to talk about what mental health issues are a big concern for young people and how she would like to see closer working between mental health services and schools.

Emma's depression first started when her dad left. This wasn't expected and Emma felt her dad moved on with his life pretty quickly. He didn't leave in a nice way, and she didn't understand why it was happening. This was closely followed by the deaths of a close friend and of her gran.

She said: “It was very difficult to understand what was happening at first.

If I went out and saw a father and daughter or mother and son, it was very upsetting. I still get quite down some days but I am able to manage that quite well.

“I was able to count on the support of my friends. Some of my friends were going through the same sort of thing so we supported each other. It helps more to talk to someone than to bottle it up.”

Emma attends college in Lincoln where she is studying Public Services, which is about the uniformed services and covers topics such as the law, citizenship and being fit and healthy. She has lived in Lincolnshire for eight years and likes playing football, hockey and swimming.

Emma hopes that being a Governor will give her the opportunity to help others have a say in the future of the Trust. She said: “I first got involved after the counsellor in group therapy told me about the Trust and how it was looking for governors. We started to discuss ideas about how to improve service and it took off from there really.

“My big idea is to help people. I also want to give counsellors a more positive image. Foundation Trust status is really good as it will bring in the skills of governors and members and help to influence decisions.”

Emma has some strong ideas lined up for giving her constituents easy ways of making their voice heard. She said: “I'm looking to set up an online forum that will give people the opportunity to ask questions and make comments. I would also like to survey members by post to find out their views.”

Greater links with schools is something that Emma would like to see developed to help people gain a better understanding of mental health issues and what effects mental ill health can have.
She said: “School children are affected by things such as bullying, parents splitting up or by grandparents dying. Mental health information could form part of PSE (Personal and Social Education) at school. Topics such as sex education and bullying are part of this and I think having people from mental health services come in and talk about issues would be good. “I would also like to see counsellors being more visible and accessible in schools.”

Emma thinks that bullying is a major worry for young people and is something that can have a negative effect on their mental health.

She said: “I used to get bullied quite a bit. A big focus for bullies is appearances. I hate it when people ignore others because of how they look.

“I think mental health issues aren’t talked about enough. There needs to be more discussion about issues, especially things like depression in younger people. It helps that soaps sometimes feature these issues, but I don’t think people can fully understand it unless they experience it. It is good that they are putting it in though.”

What do you think? If Emma is your governor and you’d like to get in touch with her, please contact the Membership Office (details on the back page).

WIN A FANTASTIC MP3 PLAYER AND SPEAKERS

Do you fancy getting your hands on a fantastic 2GB MP3 player, courtesy of Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Maplin Electronics?

To be in with a chance of winning, all you need to do is read through Better Together and find the answer to the question below!

We are offering a 2GB digital OLED Lion MP3 player that can hold up to 1,000 songs, plus a set of i-Station Traveller speakers, meaning you can share your tunes with friends wherever you are.

Service users with the Lincoln STEP Team have been taking part in drama workshops with students from which college?

Answer ..........................................................
Name ..........................................................
Address ..........................................................
..........................................................
..........................................................
Post code ..........................................................
Contact telephone number ..............................................

The closing date for entries is 16 June 2008. Please return this form to: MP3 Player competition, Membership Office, Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Cross O’Cliff, Bracebridge Heath, Lincoln, LN4 2HN.

To enter this competition, you have to be a member of Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

If you are not yet a member and would like the chance to enter, please complete the application form on page 8 and return it along with your entry.
Alzheimer’s disease

Alzheimer’s disease is the most common form of dementia, affecting around 417,000 people in the UK. It is a physical disease affecting the brain. During the course of the disease, ‘plaques’ and ‘tangles’ develop in the structure of the brain, leading to the death of brain cells. People with Alzheimer’s also have a shortage of some important chemicals in their brain.

Alzheimer’s is a progressive disease, which means that gradually, over time, more parts of the brain are damaged. As this happens, the symptoms become more severe.

Symptoms

No two individuals are the same, but people in the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease may experience lapses of memory and have problems finding the right words. As the disease progresses they may:

- Become confused, and frequently forget the names of people, places, appointments and recent events.
- Experience mood swings. They may feel sad or angry. They may feel scared and frustrated by their increasing memory loss.
- Become more withdrawn due either to a loss of confidence or to communication problems.

As the disease progresses, people with Alzheimer’s will need more support from those who care for them. Eventually they will need help with all their daily activities.

What causes Alzheimer’s disease?

So far, no one single factor has been identified as a cause for Alzheimer’s disease. It is likely that a combination of factors, including age, genetic inheritance, environmental factors, diet and overall general health, are responsible.

Getting a diagnosis

If you are concerned about your own health, or the health of someone close to you, it is important to seek help from a GP as soon as possible to help plan for the future, access treatments and get advice and support.

There is no straightforward test for dementia. A diagnosis is usually made by excluding other causes. The GP or specialist will need to rule out infection, vitamin deficiency, thyroid problems, brain tumours, the side-effects of drugs and depression.

Specialists

Your GP may ask a specialist for help in carrying out a diagnosis. The specialist may be an old-age psychiatrist, a neurologist, a physician in geriatric medicine or a general psychiatrist. Who you see depends on the age of the person being examined, how physically able they are, and how well services are developed in the area.

Treatment

There is currently no cure for Alzheimer’s disease. However, some drug treatments are available that can ameliorate the symptoms or slow down the disease progression in some people. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance at www.nice.org.uk has the most up-to-date information.

Caring for someone with dementia

Much can be done at a practical level to ensure that people with Alzheimer’s live as independently as possible for as long as possible.

Information reproduced courtesy of the Alzheimer’s Society
www.alzheimers.org.uk