

## News and media

### Trust sponsors media award

23rd May 2006

South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust and Sound Minds are jointly sponsoring a new award for print journalism in this year's Mental Health Media Awards.

The awards, to be held on 10th October, World Mental Health Day, are designed to recognise the positive contribution the media can make to our understanding of mental health, and celebrate the best portrayals of mental distress and reporting of mental health issues.

Although this will be their 13th year, up until now the awards have been only for TV and radio. By supporting the new Print Award, the Trust recognises the key role that journalists and editors play in encouraging a better understanding of mental illness in the media. The new award is for an "article or feature which most constructively covers a mental health issue or story".

Interim Chief Executive Christine Carter says: "We believe we have a responsibility to help challenge stigma and discrimination on the grounds of mental health. People can and do recover from mental distress, yet stigma sticks and many people say it is the worst part."

The awards attract a large number of entries and generate considerable interest among programme makers and broadcasters. The awards ceremony, held at BAFTA, is a high-profile event attended by journalists, broadcasters, producers and people from the world of mental health. This year, the keynote speaker is Alastair Campbell. Having worked in journalism and PR and suffered a serious nervous breakdown himself, he has strong opinions on the responsibility of the press in reporting mental health issues.

Mr Campbell says: "I am pleased to support the Mental Health Media Awards and the recognition of the improved media portrayal of mental health issues. But there is still a long way to go and the media must accept its responsibility for its part in perpetuating stigma and discrimination around mental health.

"With one in four people experiencing some kind of mental health problem in their lifetime, this is an important topic which requires the media to take its responsibilities seriously. There is still an awful lot of bad coverage of mental health issues. The Mental Health Media Awards recognise the good."

Paul Brewer of Sound Minds, a Battersea-based studio that focuses on music and other arts activities for people under the continuing care of community mental health teams, adds: "Many, many people go through times in their lives when things fall apart – I know I have - and yet there is still widespread fear around mental health issues. There are great examples of responsible journalism out there that deserve recognition."

If you've read, heard or seen anything that you think deserves recognition for its portrayal of mental health, visit the awards website at [www.mhmawards.com](http://www.mhmawards.com) to find out more about the various categories and make a nomination online. There are 29 days left to enter before the closing date.

*Press contact: Philippa Braidwood on 0208 682 6477.*

*Note for journalists: Dr Rachel Perkins, Director of Quality Assurance and User/Carer Experience at South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, is a service user and happy to be interviewed about her experience.*

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### Carers week event 2006 - information and relaxation day for carers

12th May 2006

South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust is holding a Carers' Event at Springfield Hospital on Monday 12 June as part of this year's national **Carers Week (June 12 – 18)**.

Building on the success of last year's afternoon garden party for carers, which was very popular, this year the Trust has decided to expand the event to run from 9.45am to 4pm.

The morning session will focus on information for carers, with talks from some of the Trust's experts on relapse prevention, the side effects of medication and the role and support needs of carers.

After lunch, the emphasis will be on relaxation, to tie in with the theme of this year's Carers Week: the importance of carers' health and emotional wellbeing. Carers will have the chance to try alternative therapies including Reiki, reflexology and Indian head massage, and there will also be a T'ai Chi demonstration. To add to the afternoon's entertainment Zuriya will be performing African music, dance and story telling.

Carers Week supports the UK's six million carers – people who look after a sick or disabled friend, partner or relative. Many carers are not aware of the services available to them, and the thousands of events taking place up and down the country help to publicise the support that exists.

"Carers dedicate themselves to looking after others so that their relatives and friends can lead a better quality life," says Anjna Mehta-Lancing, the Trust's Carer Representative. "The individual roles of carers can never be fully and truly appreciated. This event is to acknowledge the work carers do and offer a 'thank-you' in the form of some relaxation and enjoyment in the company of other carers."

Carers Week 2006 is supported by a number of high-profile celebrities including actor David Jason and TV personalities Esther Rantzen, Fiona Phillips and Russell Grant – all of whom have been carers themselves.

2006 is the twelfth annual Carers Week. It is jointly organised by eight UK-wide charities: Carers UK, Counsel & Care, Crossroads Caring for Carers, Help the Aged, Macmillan Cancer Relief, MS Society, Rethink and the Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

*For further details about the Carers' Event contact Anjna Mehta-Lancing on 020 8682 6186/6418 (Wed/Thurs) or email [Anjna.Lancing@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:Anjna.Lancing@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk). For more information on Carers Week go to [www.carersweek.org](http://www.carersweek.org).*

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### Trust welcomes Korean visitors

22nd May 2006

On Thursday 18 May 2006, a group of 16 Korean men and women visited Tolworth Hospital to find out about mental health provision in the UK.

The delegation included representatives from several Korean organisations, including the National Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Labour. The visitors were met by staff from South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, which runs the hospital.

In his introduction, Jo Carmody, Adult Clinical Services Manager for Kingston, explained the structure of the Trust and outlined how it works with PCTs, local authorities and other partners. Consultant psychiatrist Dr Christine Wright then spoke about the importance of raising awareness of mental health issues in the community so that people are encouraged to seek help earlier. She went on to discuss the benefits of the Care Programme Approach, a multidisciplinary way of working that aims to ensure that all the service user's needs are met.

The visitors were then taken on a tour of the site. In the Acacias Unit, they found out about some of the help and therapies on offer to service users, including Art Therapy, Drama Therapy, Music Therapy, Symptom Management and a Post-Weekend Group, designed to support people who find weekends a difficult time. They then visited Lilacs Ward, a 23-bed acute admissions ward where facilities include a women-only section, a leisure area and a TV lounge.

The afternoon ended with a Q&A session which covered a variety of topics, including overcoming stigma in the community, budget management and allocation of resources, safeguarding human rights and the UK's public and private healthcare systems.

At the end of the afternoon, the visitors said that they had learnt a great deal. "I now have a much better understanding of the UK's mental healthcare system, and especially NHS services. It's useful to learn from your experience – I've picked up some tips about ways of ensuring human rights are protected," said Tongwoo Suh, a senior researcher from the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs. Jin Hak Kim, from the Department of Mental Health Research, commented: "In Korea, our mental health resources are very limited, and we're just starting to develop them. Your organisation is very impressive."



Photo: The Korean visitors outside Tolworth hospital

Press contact: Philippa Braidwood on 0208 682 6477.