

ncha

VoiceBox

Autumn 2023

NCHA Care and Support magazine



Better Lives Awards

Find out about our incredible Better Lives Award winners.

Pages 10 - 11



The Editorial team



Sue Parker



Rebecca Miller



Nina Carr

Welcome to this issue of **VoiceBox**

As our 50th year celebrations are coming to an end we wanted to share with you our Better Lives Awards where we recognised colleagues and customers who've achieved great things. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the colleagues and customers who've helped us reach this milestone, and we had some incredibly deserving winners from across our Care and Support services so well done to them all!

You can find out more about our award winners on pages 10 and 11 of this magazine. If you would like to watch the event you can find it on our website: www.ncha.org.uk and search for 'Better Lives Awards'.

To improve how we listen to the voices of our Care and Support customers, we've created a new group chaired by Katherine. Have a read about it on pages 4 and 5, and please do submit your ideas for the name of the group!

Finally, we've got lots of updates from different projects, including theatre trips, picnics, gardening, pet visits and more. Don't forget to enter our Christmas competition on the back cover.

Need to get in touch?

You can contact the Voicebox Editorial team via:

- ☎ 0800 013 8555
- @ voicebox@ncha.org.uk
- 💬 comments or queries sent through your support team
- 📍 NCHA, 12/14 Pelham Road, Sherwood Rise, Nottingham, NG5 1AP.

Got a story for Voicebox? 

Whether it's a poem, a story about something you've achieved, or some great photos of the activities you've been getting up to, we'd love to hear from you. Send the information to the Voicebox Editorial team or pass the information onto your support worker and you could see yourself in our next edition!



Find out about our incredible Better Lives Award winners.

10-11



04 - 05

Our new group to listen to Care and Support customers is looking for a name. Can you help?

09

Lombard Community Flats marked Big Green Week with litter picking, making bug hotels and more.



You showed us how to party for our 50th birthday!

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07

Lan went to the theatre to see Sister Act.

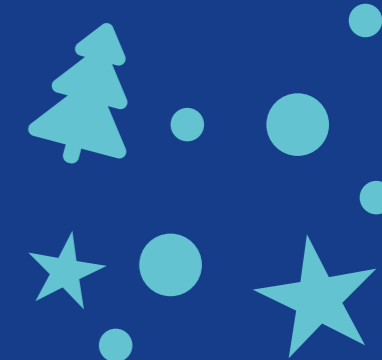
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We had a great time at Notts Pride this summer.



20

Complete our Christmas word search to enter the competition.



Improving how we listen to Care and Support customers



Tracey Ward
NCHA Head of
Care and Support

At NCHA, we're committed to listening to the views of all of our customers, including those who use our care and support services. To improve how we do this, we're creating a group to hear the voices of our service users, and care and support services.

This group will sit alongside our other customer groups, so will be formally recognised by our Board. It will play a vital role in ensuring our work to involve and listen to all of our customers includes the needs of service users.

In the summer we advertised for a chair for this group and following a comprehensive recruitment process, I'm delighted to share the news that we have now appointed Katherine Cutts, Assistant Manager at Nuthall Road, to the position.

Katherine will be joined by Judy Gray, who might be known to you as a former employee of NCHA who now volunteers to run an art group at Claremont Road, and Liana Burrell, who is external to NCHA but brings with her a wealth of experience in the care and support sector.

If you would like to get involved in this group, please talk to your support worker and they can pass your details on to Katherine.

We'll share more about the group in future issues of Voicebox magazine.



Hello from Katherine



Hi all, I'm Katherine and I'm the new chair of the Care and Support customer group. This is a very exciting new role within NCHA and I can't wait to get started.

I've worked for NCHA for 15 years now. I started working in mental health services and I'm currently working at ESL Nuthall Road, our learning disability and mental health service, which I thoroughly enjoy.

I have a lot of experience using care services for my family members and I know the difficulties and worries that can bring. This can be especially so when you feel you are not being listened to, and it can be very overwhelming.

I'm passionate about how our customers feel about the services they receive from NCHA and I'd like every customer's voice to be heard and used to influence and drive performance, and improve our services.

I want to make sure you all have a platform to talk to us and we will ensure your voice is heard regardless of any disabilities or the language you speak.



Help us choose our name!

The first thing we need your input on is the name for the new group. Like the name of this magazine, Voicebox, we want it to signify that our customers have a voice and we're listening and acting on that. So please send me your suggestions! You can email me Katherine.cutts@ncha.org.uk and I'll be accepting ideas until 31 January 2024. We'll announce the winner and the new name in the next edition of Voicebox. I look forward to working with you all.



Wishing for safety

Lizzie, a resident at Southwell Road East, wrote this emotive poem about wanting to feel safe.

Feeling scared
Is a horrible emotion
Your heart rate goes high

Feeling that you can't
Get out for safety

Seeing someone you
Care for getting scared
You can't help

Being threatened
In your own room
Or in the living room

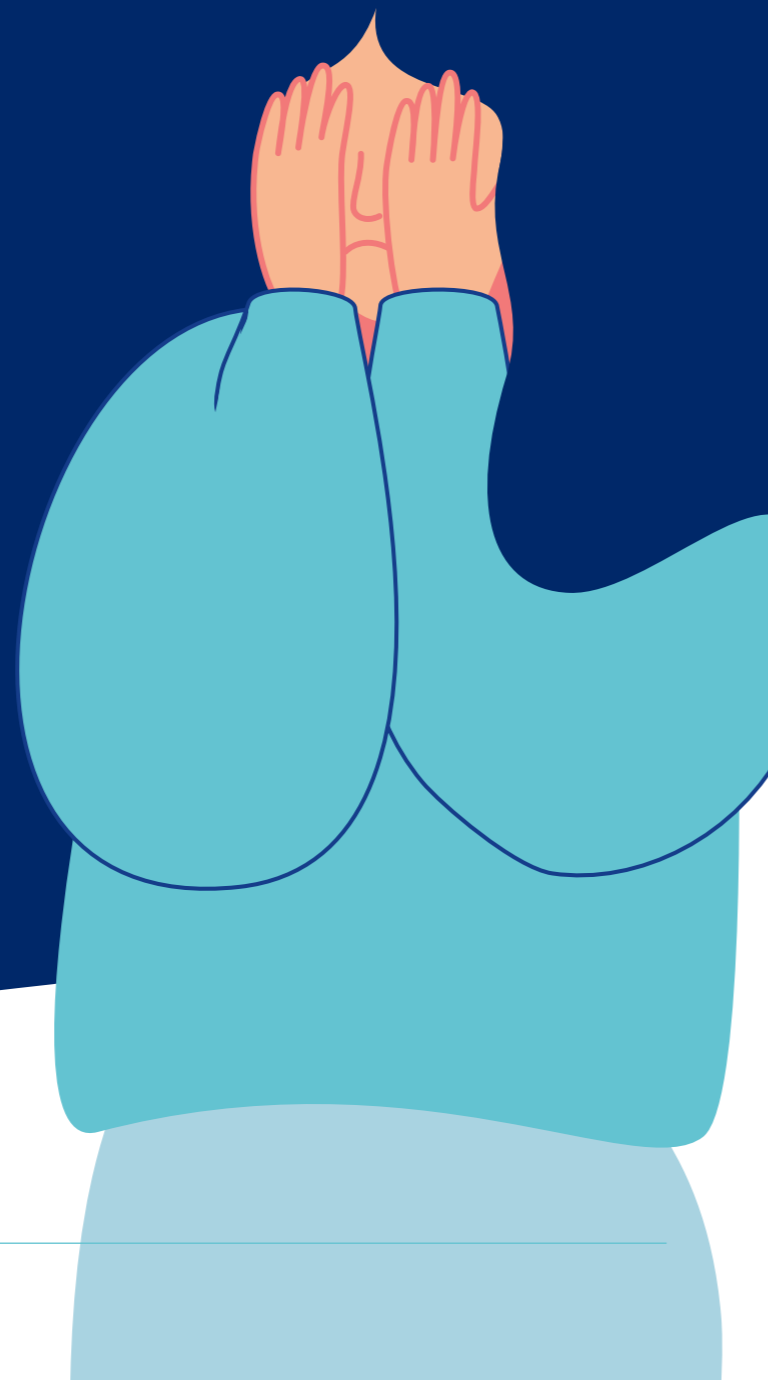
Waiting for the next
Kick off

Screaming and shouting
Makes you think about
The past which you don't
Want to remember

Old coping strategies
Come back
Fight the thoughts
Which is a challenge

Once you get through
It's hard to fight

Please let me feel
Safe.



A musical night sent from above!

From Lan at Benedict Court

I have recently been to see "Sister Act" the live show at the Theatre Royal in Nottingham, with my support worker Emma.

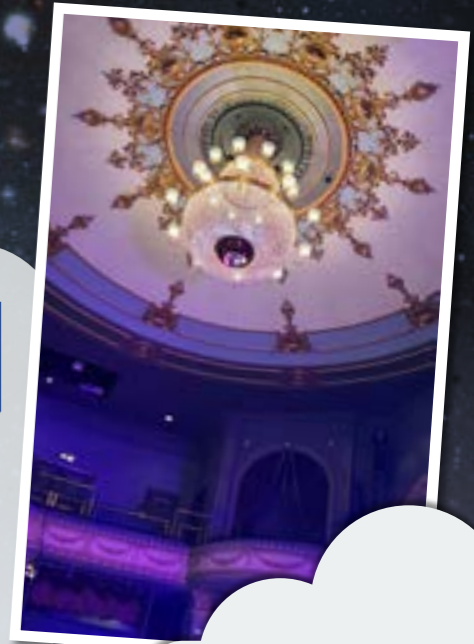
We started the day with a pre-theatre dinner at one of my favourite restaurants May Sum, and as usual the food was delicious!

When we got to the theatre, and sat in our seats I was really happy with where we were seated, because we had a great view of the stage, and I thought the theatre inside looked beautiful.

I had been looking forward to this show for a while, as Sister Act is my all-time favourite comedy film, so I really couldn't wait to see how they brought it to life on stage.

What I loved most about the show was how the character of Deloris helped all her fellow sisters find their voice, and together become an amazing choir. My favourite song in the show is "Sunday morning fever". I also really liked all the costumes as they sparkled and glistened in the theatre lights which gave it a real magical feeling, like a stage full of disco divas!

I would really recommend you go and see this show, as it has a real feel good factor that raises your spirits and lifts your soul, and it gets a thumbs up from me!





Remembering Dad



Leander, who lives at Southwell Road East, recently lost his Dad following a long illness.

In memory of him Leander has created a memorial space in the garden so he can have time to remember happy memories with his Dad.



Grief can be an incredibly strong emotion to deal with, and it's really important to talk to someone if you're struggling with it. This could be a friend or family member, your support worker, a doctor or you could call a telephone helpline.



Cruse offer bereavement support and have a free helpline. You can call them on **0808 808 1677** or find out more about them on their website: **www.cruse.org.uk**.

Big Green Week



Tenants and staff at Lombard Community Flats in Newark were doing their bit for the environment during Big Green Week in June.

Events across the seven days included taste-testing vegan bacon and pork bacon, planting tomatoes, litter picking, making bug hotels, and the legendary "Bin or bog?" game in which tenants experimented to discover what sort of things should go into the rubbish bin and which could be flushed in the bathroom!



Andy in front of two of the bug hotels.



Julian with support worker Simon ready to clean up the streets.

NCHA Better Lives Awards 2023

Celebrating our Care and Support colleagues and customers



In October we held our first ever Better Lives Awards. It was the perfect opportunity to celebrate the customers and colleagues who've helped us reach our milestone 50th anniversary this year.

We received hundreds of incredible nominations highlighting the achievements of our care and support team, and the people they support, with the final winners decided by a customer panel.

We want to take this opportunity to say thank to everyone who got involved and nominated a person or a group of people. Take a look at our care and support winners below. A full list of categories and winners can be found on our website:

www.ncha.org.uk/about-ncha/ncha-at-50/better-lives-awards/



Customer Champion Award

Winner: Keeley Pogmore, Support Worker from PST North.

Keeley went above and beyond supporting a service user to claim back thousands of pounds of lost benefits helping him to create a better life for himself.



Outstanding Team Award

Winner: Derbyshire WISH domestic abuse support service.

This group of colleagues help women to flee domestic abuse situations and support them to establish new independent lives. They always work together as a team to achieve the best outcomes for the people they support – showing resilience, great team work and positivity when faced with adversity.



Inspirational Leader Award

Winner: Lesley Rawlinson, Project Manager at Ashland Road West.

This award was given to Lesley Rawlinson, Project Manager at Ashland Road West, a care home for adults with highly complex needs. Lesley was described as having a leadership style that engages with her team and inspires them to stand up for the rights of the individuals in their care.



Customer Journey Award

Winner: Tiffany, ex-service user at Bridge Street.

Tiffany has grown in independence since living at one of our supported living projects. She actively engaged in support, learnt many new skills and is now living independently. The judging panel said: "She has been on a huge journey, and she embodied the essence of this award."



Person of the Year 2023

Our final award was Person of the Year Award, voted for by colleagues.

Winner: Carla Williams, Support Worker, Nottingham Homelessness Prevention Service.

Carla is well known and loved across NCHA for combining her role as a support worker, with being a Unison steward and a diversity champion too. She was nominated for always going the extra mile, for colleagues and service users. She was described as dedicated, passionate, enthusiastic and supportive.

As one colleague put it: "If you ever need anything Carla will always put her hand up to help, she is caring and kind always has a smile on her face."



Reflecting on mental health

AR, a resident at one of our projects, wrote this poem reflecting the differences they perceive in mental health treatment for men and women.

Men tell health

Men tell health
But not to others
Mental health
Just gets covered

Fear of ridicule
Keeps them so isolated
The taboo of mental health
We need to break it
Where shall we start?

You judge us on appearance
Not what you see
Under the surface
You do not know what's going on with me
I'm a man, so you know I can't be weak
I will get laughed at, at once if I even speak

It's time to change the stigma
Paint a whole new picture
It's easy for a female
To express depression
But harder for a mister!

Safely charging e-bikes and e-scooters

Important tips following a recent fire

Recently there was a fire in a service user's flat which was believed to have started because of an electric bike that had been left charging overnight and so had overheated. Thankfully no-one was injured, but there was considerable damage to the property and sadly the occupier lost many of their personal possessions.

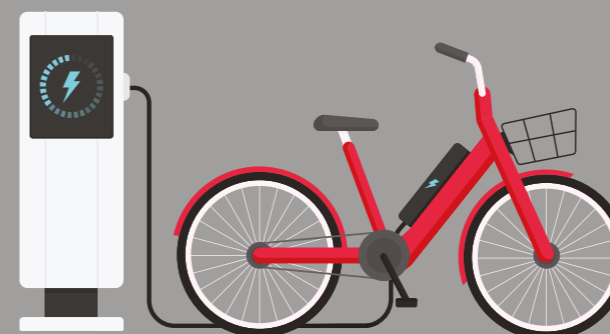
An increasing number of people have e-bikes and e-scooters, and most of them have lithium-ion batteries, which can be charged in the home. It's really important that, when charging e-bikes and e-scooters, you do so safely to reduce the fire risk.

Here are some useful tips:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions when charging, and always unplug your charger when it's finished charging.
- Ensure you have working smoke alarms.
- Charge batteries whilst you are awake and alert so if a fire should occur you can respond quickly.
- Always use the manufacturer approved charger for the product.
- If you need a new charger, buy an official replacement charger from a reputable seller.
- Do not cover chargers or battery packs when charging.
- Do not overcharge your battery – check the manufacturer's instructions for charge times.
- Do not overload socket outlets or use inappropriate extension leads.
- Avoid storing or charging e-bikes and e-scooters on escape routes or in communal areas.

Remember:

Remember to buy e-bikes, e-scooters and chargers/batteries from reputable retailers. They should include the correct CE marking so that you know that they meet the required safety standards. Make sure you do your research before making a purchase.



In the event of a lithium-ion battery fire – do not attempt to extinguish the fire.

Get out, stay out, call 999.

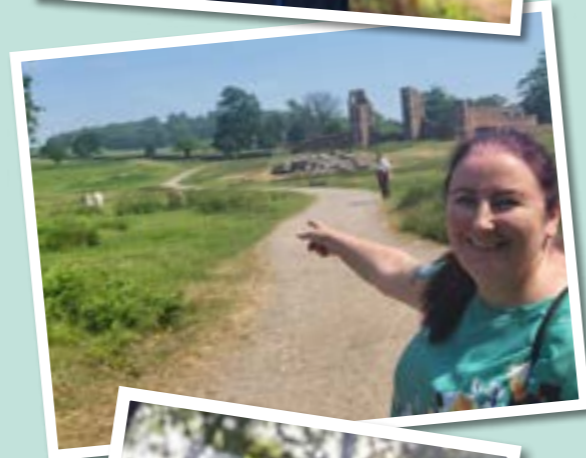
Using nature to improve wellbeing

Joey shares their experience of Green SPark



In collaboration with the Bradgate Park Trust, NCHA's Green SPark programme provides nature-centric wellbeing activities for customers with mental health issues in Leicestershire.

These include everything from wall building and wellbeing walks through 800 acres of Bradgate Park's beautiful landscape, to bird watching and 'river rambling' to identify local species in the water.



Referrals

Green SPark is open for new referrals from people who live in Leicestershire. Contact your support worker if you're interested in getting involved.



A customer's perspective

Joey tells us about their experience of Green SPark.

"I took part in the 'wild wind down' in August 2023 based at Bradgate Park in the Leicestershire countryside. We did lots of activities and even had a campfire lunch which I made. I used the time to get to know new people and met ranger Rob and volunteer coordinator Di.

In the activity we did a blindfold task where we trusted another person to go and meet a tree. I took part in this, it was quite disorientating but because I trusted the person I was paired with I managed to do it. Being partially sighted I had to have full trust.

We then learnt about a basic snake knot which I'd never done before. After that I got distracted by the campfire and helped ranger Rob build and light a campfire which was cool. I had great fun learning the safety of the campfire and asking different questions learning lots.

After the fire was lit, there was a bit of a wait but we finally got our grub! We had corn on the cob, veggie sticks and a venison sausage! All of which was super yummy and super well cooked! All the activities I managed to do, I enjoyed and met some nice people too."



All the activities I managed to do, I enjoyed and met some nice people too.





Notts Pride 2023

We had such a great day lending our support to Notts Pride 2023.

Over 8,000 people attended the celebration on Saturday 29 July, in support of the LGBTQ+ community. In its 10th year, it was the biggest Notts Pride to date.

This year was made extra special with our care and support artwork competition. Customers from NCHA services submitted their artwork to be featured on our postcard which was handed out to hundreds of people on the day.

The competition was won by Katie, who lives at our Second Avenue project and created a really colourful picture for us.

Notts Pride was a great opportunity to chat to people about what we do, and it was lovely to see so many colleagues and customers. We were especially delighted to receive a visit from our competition winner Katie, who stopped by to see her postcard in print and being handed out.



Well done Katie!

Pet Pals pilot at Sherwood House



In September residents at Sherwood House enjoyed the benefits of having some fluffy four legged friends to visit.



A group of NCHA colleagues are developing ideas on how we could tackle the feeling of loneliness amongst our customers.

One resident Marjorie, who has always had a fear of cats and dogs, put her concerns to one side and attended the event. She was happier letting the dogs keep their distance, but she really enjoyed the event, particularly watching the dogs perform their tricks and meeting other residents.



There are numerous wellbeing and health benefits associated with animals, because of their affectionate and loyal nature's pets often reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. Because of this, the 'Pet Pals' project has been started!

NCHA colleague Helen, who works as a project admin, agreed to take her three lovely dogs, Kara, Maia and Salka, to Sherwood House for a special visit.

All have been involved in dog shows; Maia is now 14 and retired, Kara is eight and has been to Crufts on multiple occasions, and last but certainly not least was Salka – she is only four years old and is nicknamed 'devil dog' by Helen for her outgoing and rebellious personality!

Cindy, Head Housekeeper at Sherwood House, said: "We love dogs in the workplace. Our manager lets colleagues and family members bring their dogs in. It's been great for morale and everyone will always stop for a pet and a chat – it's great for creating opportunities for positive interactions with residents."



Celebrating our 50th anniversary

April 2023 marked 50 years since NCHA was first established. Across the whole business we held a range of events and activities, including an exhibition which documented our achievements and lots of our colleagues got involved in raising over £5,000 for the homelessness charity, Crisis.

In Care and Support lots of our projects held parties to celebrate the big occasion and we were delighted to see lots of people joining in with the fun!



Our Clifton open afternoon

In September we held an information event at our new development on Farnborough Road in Clifton. We invited colleagues and members of the local community to come and see the site and discuss the development.

We're currently building our new head office here, alongside an impressive three-storey Independent Living for Older People scheme (ILOP), which consists of 50 one and two-bed apartments for people aged 55 and over.

The site will also be home to 14 apartments and six bungalows for supported living, and the existing sports facilities are being kept.

At the open event, Geda Construction, our lead contractor, kindly funded the hire of four bouncy castles, which kept our younger visitors entertained. Our community vehicle was also out with crafts and activities for the children too. We also had an ice cream van and a friendly football tournament for colleagues.

Lots of NCHA colleagues were there to share information about the development and we were pleased to see lots of visitors wanting to find out more.

We're looking forward to being part of the Clifton community, so this event was a great starting point for us to build relationships with local people and their families.

If you are interested in keeping up-to-date on the development news, visit our website to sign up for our Farnborough Road newsletter



