

Talking to...

In our editions of Respite Grapevine, we're going to be finding out more about our service users and support staff with some deeply delving questions. Here are the first...

Shaun Smith



What would be your favourite holiday?

It would have to be a holiday to Ibiza with my friends, it would be a great atmosphere.

What kind of food do you like?

I really enjoy my mum's Sunday cooked lunch, with beef and mint sauce.

What do you enjoy about respite?

I like the feeling I get when I know I've improved someone's life to some degree. One time we were taking a service user to the cinema, a number of problems came up, but we overcame them all and got him there. He enjoyed it so much as he hadn't got to go for years.

What's your favourite childhood memory?

I guess it could be when I went to the pantomime to watch Aladdin. My cousin Ian Beale was in the performance so we got to go backstage and meet all of the actors, including Cobra from the Gladiators.

Paul Clunn



What would be your favourite holiday?

It would definitely have to be Stockport. I went there with Respite and we looked around the place and I enjoyed the holiday.

What kind of food do you like?

I enjoy Chinese food, but I like home cooked food too. I love the food in Respite.

What do you enjoy about respite?

I like meeting the different people and enjoying seeing the staff when ever I'm there. I enjoying going to the pub with them. I really love Respite.

What's your favourite childhood memory?

My favourite memory is going out and about on cruises. Also when I went swimming with Ken from OHT - when we went to Ty-Gwyn together.

Elmo Merrett



What would be your favourite holiday?

A relaxing weekend away with my girlfriends, such as London, it would have to be a city break as I burn in the sun and where factor 50 when we get the sunshine here.

What kind of food do you like?

I'm a vegetarian so some vegetables with fish, I love seafood and when I visited Italy tried a seafood dish, the octopus was lovely.

What do you enjoy about respite?

It's always something different, and there is such a mix of people. I get to input my ideas, and I'm very creative so love that.

What's your favourite childhood memory?

It would have to be when I made sawdust pictures in nursery. I made a rabbit and remember being really pleased with myself. I'm very crafty and love making things - I make all of my own birthday and Christmas cards.

Nicki Williams



What would be your favourite holiday?

My ideal holiday would be one of the respite holidays. I really want to go to Hertfordshire with Kelly who is another service user at OHT.

What kind of food do you like?

I love Chinese food and curries, as long as the curries aren't too hot though, maybe a chicken korma or a chicken tikka. Mum always makes a nice curry.

What do you enjoy about respite?

The best thing is getting out and spending time outdoors. I'm going to St Davids hall to watch Abbanania in June with Elmo who works at OHT.

What's your favourite childhood memory?

Probably going to the cinema with my family.

Respitegrapevine

RESPITE CARE MARKS 21ST ANNIVERSARY

Welcome to the Respite Grapevine



Annette Edwards Registered Manager

We're delighted to say that our respite service marks its 21st anniversary this year and we're planning a feast of activity to celebrate.

One of the first things we're doing is launching our very own respite newsletter (yes this is it) so that you can read more about our plans in 2009.

We'll also be updating our website (www.oht.org.uk) frequently with pictures and information about how the year's progressing. Please do visit it if you can.

We're even planning a party – yes, any excuse, we know!

The date for your diary is Saturday 21 November 2009. While we don't have all the details just yet, we do know it will be a night to remember for service users and their families as well as the OHT team. So keep it free, and we'll be posting all you need to know on www.oht.org.uk very soon.

If you'd like to contribute any pictures or words to the newsletter, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact our newsletter editor Natalie on 029 20 733526 or email Natalie@vibemail.co.uk

Enjoy!

Launching an even better service

To mark our 21st year, we've taken the time to look at the service we provide at respite in a bid to find ways of improving it further.

Our aim has always been to provide a quality respite service for users, their carers and families either at home or away from their everyday life.

One of the best things about the service is that it supports people with a learning disability to experience life away from their home. Many clients enjoy developing independent life skills and social relationships too.

One of the new projects we have in the pipeline, which we're particularly proud of, is a new calendar of holidays and days out for people using the service.

On the menu is a series of visits to tourist attractions and places of interest plus an option to holiday in other regions of the UK.

Our regional manager Liz Corscadden said: "Respite really should be a positive experience for service users, carers and their families by providing a real break for everyone involved. As part of our 21st anniversary, we've really looked at what people want from a break. What we've come up with is an action-packed summer which we hope will add person centred care to those enjoying respite at Opportunity Housing Trust."

See more about our plans on page 2.

About us...

Opportunity Housing Trust, (OHT) was established in 1985 as a non-profit making organisation, aiming to empower people with learning disabilities in South Wales to lead valued lives as participating members of the local community.

Our mission...

Opportunity Housing Trust respite aims to provide a quality service for users, their carers and families, who want respite for their individual needs.

Why?...

Respite gives carers some time to themselves, while those who are cared for get to enjoy a complete change of scene and new experiences. We like to think of it as a break for everyone.

Inside...

Page 2 It's holiday season



Page 7: Good luck Ken!



How to find us...

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Going all green fingered

One of the most important elements of respite stay for many service users is the opportunity to experience something different.

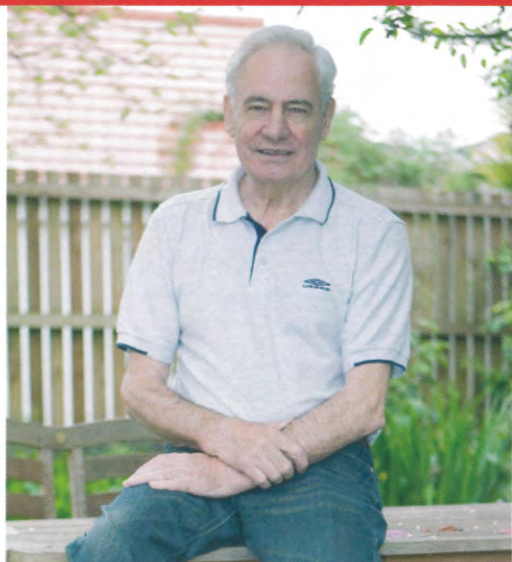
While our holiday programme (on pages 4 and 5) certainly ticks that box, we know there's plenty of new experiences that can be generated back at base too.

One of our latest projects has been to 'grow our own'.

Yes, while there's not a gardening expert as such amongst us, we've decided to do try our hand at going organic.

In the back garden of Pantbach Avenue, we've created our own vegetable patch, which we hope will serve us well throughout the year.

Shaun Smith said: "Gardening can be very enjoyable and therapeutic. There is a great deal of satisfaction too in seeing the vegetables spring to life, particularly when you have spent time nurturing them. We are really beginning to see service users enjoy the process and benefit from getting their hands dirty."



Ken has been nominated for the Wales Care Awards

Good luck Ken!

We nominated one of our support workers, Ken Deacon for the Wales Care Awards, and he has made it through to the next stage.

This is some of what we've said in his nomination...

We have had the pleasure of working with Ken at OHT for nine years. He really is an example to all and we are proud to have him on our team.

Service users may come for a day, a weekend or even a week but their stay is always a short one. This means time can be short for our development workers in getting to know the needs and wants of such service users. Ken rises to this challenge. He is a favourite among many of our respite service users and has his 'own way' with both them and their families. Our service users are happy in his care and their families are comfortable with Ken in charge of their care. For many families, leaving a loved one in the care of another can be a big decision. Ken makes it easier for them.

I suppose we could term Ken, the father of respite at OHT. We all look up to him. He is a role model because his work defines him.

Ken's principles of social care and helping others goes beyond the day job. Just recently, he was featured in a local newspaper for donating his 50th pint of blood to the Welsh Blood Service.

Ken will now be invited to meet the judges of the Care Forum Awards within the next few weeks and will find out if he is through to the finals which take place in October.

Meet the team

Opportunity Housing Trust offers respite to around 90 service users in Cardiff. We have two houses in the city, which have been the focus of our respite service over the 21 years.

This year we're developing a busy calendar of days out and holidays too, which you can read more about on pages four and five.

We have an incredibly dedicated team at respite and here they are...

Cheryl Giles Assistant Manager

"I love respite as it give me great satisfaction in seeing how service users improve their capabilities and their skills. It's fantastic to see them move to onto their own homes, and semi supported housing."

Lucy Driscoll support worker

"I've been a member of the respite team for over five years now, what I really enjoy about

the work is its diversity. Spending time with people with such a variety of interests and skills is a real pleasure. I've made some great friendships with service users and continue to do so."

Rhianyth Bater support worker

"I'm new here at respite and already feel part of the team. I love working with all the different people that stay here with us. There are always new faces to meet and new experiences to be had."



Annette Edwards registered manager



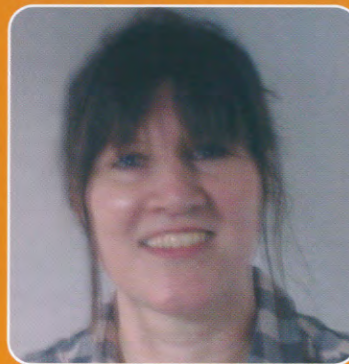
Liz Corscadden regional manager



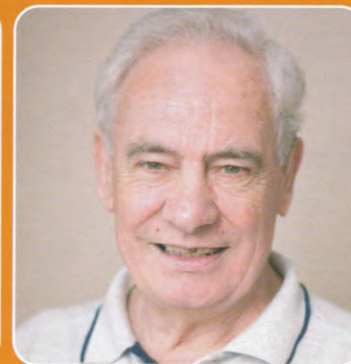
Cheryl Giles assistant manager



Rebecca Bartlett support staff



Sue Richards support staff



Ken Deacon support staff



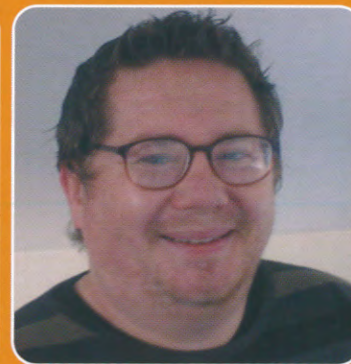
Teresa Davies support staff



Shaun Smith support staff



Elmo Merrett, support staff



Jeremy Warden support staff



Lucy Driscoll support staff



Rhianyth Bater support staff



Ralph Bikram support staff



Richard Mathias support staff



Paul Harries support staff



Vicki Williams Locality Co-ordinator

Welcome to Vicki who will be dealing with our bookings and correspondence

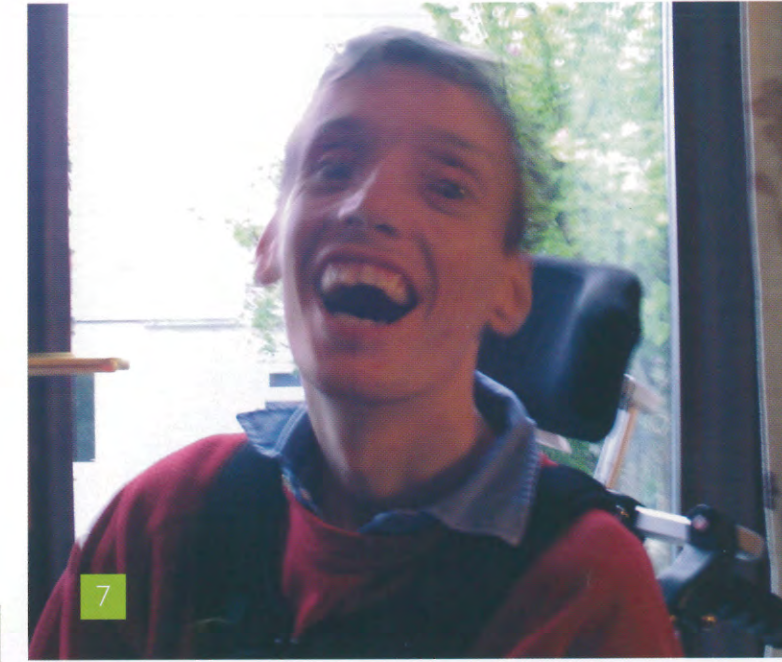
Jeremy's Gems

We've tasked our support worker Jeremy Warden with getting together a gallery of pictures to show us all what's been happening in respite lately.

Here are the first ones for the album. Remember, more will be posted at www.oht.org.uk. If you've got any pics that you'd like to see featured please do email them to Natalie@vibemail.co.uk



- 1) Shaun and Paul enjoy a game of Connect 4
- 2) Ken enjoys a cuppa with Nicki
- 3) Mavis helps prepare tea
- 4) Elouise and Annette make music
- 5) Anthony enjoys a holiday in Pembroke
- 6) Paul and Karen plant some seeds
- 7) Gareth enjoys a joke



Summer of Fun

There's no doubt that respite care has come a long way in 21 years. Some may say it's unrecognisable to what it was more than two decades ago.

While our houses will remain at the centre of OHT's respite care package, we're all very excited about the new development of a summer programme.

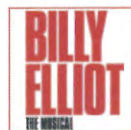
Annette Edwards Registered Manager for Opportunity Housing Trust believes the new look respite offering is going to prove a real hit with not only service users, but their carers and families too.

She said: "One of the best things about the service is that it supports people with a learning disability to experience life away from their home. Many people enjoy developing independent life skills and social relationships too.

"Getting out and about across the UK is certainly going to provide our service with a number of new opportunities. Many will be going to places they have never seen before and enjoying very new experiences. We are really hoping that the summer programme becomes an intrinsic part of our respite service from 2009 onwards."

Highlights of our programme include:

- A trip to London to see a West End show with an overnight stay at a hotel
- Plans to enjoy the musical and theatrical events on our doorstep in Cardiff this summer, such as Brecon Jazz Festival and live bands
- For animal lovers there's the chance to visit Bristol Zoo and Longleat
- We'll be visiting some much loved towns and cities including Tenby and Stratford upon Avon
- For those who like an active day out, we've pencilled in a visit to the Brecon Mountain Railway and a boat trip on the Waverly
- We're hoping everyone who loves the great outdoors will sign up for our day trips to a number of British castles and parks.
- And the icing on the cake will be a series of holidays to cottages in the West Country, chalets in Pembrokeshire, Butlins in Minhead, exchange holidays in the north west of England and short breaks in The Isle of Wight and St Ives.



Christine tells us why she loves respite

One of OHT's longest using service users tells us why she has been visiting OHT pretty much since the beginning and what respite does for her.

Christine John has been using respite services since a teenager, and has been visiting Opportunity Housing Trust since she was 25 years old. She enjoys visiting the OHT home on Pantbach Avenue so much she likes to stay from Monday to a Friday during the Spring and Summer months.

Christine Says: "I love spending time at Pantbach, I enjoy being around the staff and always look forward to going there. There is always something going on at Pantbach, I love the shopping trips, our drives to St. Fagans and of course our visits to the pub."

Christine's dad, Mr. John decided to get Christine involved in respite care to allow her the opportunity to try new things and meet new people.

He said: "Christine always looks forward to going to Pantbach, she's been on many trips with them over the years and we have already signed her up to a number of outings on the summer programme for this year. The staff at Pantbach are all wonderful and both Christine and myself have built great relationships with them over the years."

Christine is due to take part in a number of OHT Summer programmes, including a holiday to Pembroke. She will have the chance to take part in a number of activities, including picnics, meals and visits to local attractions accompanied by OHT staff.

Christine said: "I'm really looking forward to the trip to Pembroke, Geraint one of my favourite service users at OHT will be coming with us also. I've been on trips in the past and have always had a great time."

Christine always brings her own recipes when she comes to stay at OHT and enjoys to help cook tea, such as when she cooked jam tarts recently.



We're getting a makeover



As they say, an Englishman's home is his castle and we think the same goes for the Welsh too.

new furniture and carpets which will really add a new dimension to the surroundings.

So we're investing once again in our respite homes to make them an even nicer place to stay for our service users.

We're going to be making more of the back garden too in the hope that the British summertime will be a little better this year.

First on the to do list, is Pantbach Avenue, which is having a makeover, both internally and externally.

Cheryl Giles said: "The presentation of our homes is extremely important. When you go on holiday and walk into a hotel or guesthouse you want it to be impressive and the same applies here. When our service users and family pull up outside the front door, we want them to be very glad they came."

The front of the house is getting some attention to improve what the experts call 'kerb appeal' while inside there's more than just a lick of paint going on. The plan is to have some

You ask for it and we will try and do it. At OHT we're open to tailor holidays and breaks to meet individual needs.

