

MEDIA RELEASE



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Garden therapy reaps rewards for Bradgate patients and staff

Patients and staff at Leicester's Bradgate Mental Health Unit have been presented with awards after creating beautiful garden 'havens' outside their wards.

Six wards providing care for adults with acute mental illness took part in Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust's (LPT) first 'Let's Get Gardening' competition. It is hoped that the horticultural showcase will become an annual summer highlight for staff and patients alike.

It was made possible thanks to an ambitious project by Raising Health, LPT's charity, to transform the outdoor spaces at the Bradgate Unit. The aim is to bring a touch of home and provide rewarding, therapeutic activities for people with acute mental illness that is over and above their NHS treatment and supports their recovery.

Top prize of a Let's Get Gardening rosette, gold award and garden centre voucher was won by Phoenix Ward, at the Herschel Prins Centre, where patients and staff have created a beautiful and imaginative flower garden and an allotment area which includes courgettes and herbs. They took inspiration from visits to local parks and 'pick your own' farms, adding inspired ideas such as strawberry plants to their flower garden.

On their ward they have taken photographs and created displays of their gardening journey to create a beautiful garden area.

Gold awards also went to Heather, Beaumont and Aston ward patients and team, with silver awards for Watermead ward at the Bradgate Unit and Belvoir ward, LPT's male psychiatric intensive care unit.

Cathy Ellis, chair of LPT, was part of the judging panel. She commented: "The quality of entries across all the wards that entered was stunning and it demonstrated the huge amount of creativity, enthusiasm and pride that our patients and our staff are putting into the gardening projects on the Bradgate site.

"Not only is the Let's Get Gardening project developing previously unloved garden areas on the site into colourful havens, it's giving our patients the opportunity to have hands-on involvement in transforming the places where they are receiving care."

Another judge, head of occupational therapy at the Bradgate Unit, Katie Crowfoot added: "Gardening not only helps us bring colour and life to the outdoor spaces here, it helps people to enjoy being outside as well as learning new skills and aiding their recovery.

"We have a number of outdoor spaces and ambitions to create a sensory garden, plant nursery and vegetable plot where patients can learn how to grow and care for plants and use what is grown to improve the ward gardens.

"We set up the Raising Health Let's Get Gardening appeal to raise funds so that we can maximise the therapeutic potential of our outdoor areas.

"Through these activities we can help patients develop the skills to grow fresh produce in small spaces, learn how to manage their money, encourage them to eat healthily, have an occupational identity, a purpose and a routine."

Donations to support Let's Get Gardening can be made via the Raising Health website.

<https://www.raisinghealth.org.uk/appeals/lets-get-gardening>



Captions: TOP Judges Cathy Ellis (far left) Sam Wilson (far right) and Katie Crowfoot (second from right) in the winning Phoenix Ward garden with deputy ward sister Laura Cox (second from left), and ward sister -Jo Kelly.

INSET: Giant draughts game, one of the creative details in the Phoenix garden.

BOTTOM: Watermead ward's garden is a blaze of colour as the judging panel visits to judge the efforts of staff and patients with healthcare support worker James Preston (far right).

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

- Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides community health, mental health and learning disabilities services for the one million people living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We have a budget in excess of £278 million and employ approximately 6,300 staff. For more information visit: www.leicspart.nhs.uk. Our registered charity is called Raising Health (charity number 1057361). The charity fundraises to support excellent care initiatives, equipment and innovations which go above and beyond core NHS provision to enhance the experience of our patients, service users and staff. See www.raisinghealth.org.uk
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