

# THE CHANNEL

## Our survey said...

Thank you to everyone who responded to the latest staff survey. It has given us clear pointers on our areas of strength and those for development.

We scored really well in areas such as staff understanding their individual and team roles, and feeling able to admit their mistakes. Also, staff generally felt they had good support from their managers - and were respected by colleagues and management.

Where we didn't score so well however, was in areas like communication between directorates, pay, grading and career prospects, and leadership skills development. We also identified a need to increase our support for religious diversity and childcare commitments.

The full results booklet will be issued in May. This is later than usual because we've spent extra time to really unpick the meaning behind the figures by holding follow-on focus groups with staff. A better understanding of the statistics will enable us to draw up meaningful action plans that will – for the first time – be included in the results booklet.

Shaun Rafferty, Head of Human Resources said: "The information we've gathered from the focus groups will be vital in making sure our directorate action plans are spot on, and will genuinely strengthen the council's position as a good employer."

Progress on the action plans will be reported at the next staff conferences.

Contact: Shaun Rafferty on 291290



### Jungle fun at Hove's new Children's Centre

The new Children's Centre for families living in Hove officially opened on 12 February, and is based on the site of the old Conway Court Clinic, Clarendon Road.

Children from the nearby Honeycroft nursery dressed up as jungle animals and took part in a cheerful sing and sign session with a speech therapist. They also enjoyed face painting and stalls at the opening event.

The centre offers both baby and parenting groups, breastfeeding support and child health clinics. Community teams of health visitors and early years workers are on site too, alongside a midwife clinic and speech and language support.

Conway Court is the latest Children's Centre to open as part of council plans to have a centre in every community.  
Contact: 266011

# SNIPPETS

## ADULT SOCIAL CARE CHANGES

A transformation programme has begun in Adult Social Care, scheduled to take place over the next three years. The aim is to change the delivery of services in the city to give people more control over the support they receive. Regular updates on the progress can be found in the Wave library.

**Contact:** Jess Harper 295245

## NEW VISUAL IDENTITY GUIDELINES

The council has adopted a new set of guidelines covering issues such as using the logo, writing style and design. The aim of the change is to update and clarify our identity to ensure we send out a consistent message as an organisation. The guidelines can be found in the Wave library.

**Contact:** Adrian Ashwell 293034

## NEW EMAIL SYSTEM

Our email system will soon be replaced by Microsoft Exchange, and accessed using Microsoft Outlook. Full details will be published on the Wave.

**Contact:** Chris Reynolds 291951

## TAX FREE BIKE SCHEME

The current window to apply for a tax free bike loan closes on 28 March, so hurry if you want to apply!

**Contact:** Helen Marshall 293860  
[www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/stafftaxfreebikes](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/stafftaxfreebikes)

## CITY CLEAN SWEEPS IT AGAIN!

This year Cityclean staff have won four of the Local Government Get On awards, including the Skills for Life Champion and three Adult Learner awards. The depot's on-site learning resource centre is such a success, 120 staff have signed up and taken at least one course in the last two years.

**Contact:** Elaine Sweetman 294711

## New system for decisions

Preparations are under way for the council to introduce a Leader and cabinet system for decision making.

If councillors agree to the change in April it will replace a number of the existing committees with a Leader (elected by the whole council) who will appoint a cabinet of up to nine councillors responsible for different areas of our business. If these proposals are approved by the council, the new system will start in May.

The full council will still be in charge of setting the budget and other major policy initiatives, and committees like planning and licensing will remain.

Perhaps the biggest change will be the increased role of councillors from all political parties to oversee and scrutinise decisions of the cabinet in open public meetings.

There will also be a new 'Forward Plan', which will give councillors and the public up to four months notice of key decisions.

Alex Bailey, Director of Strategy and Governance said, "Colleagues across the organisation have been working hard to prepare for the changes.

"There will be training and support for staff immediately affected by the new arrangements, there are frequently asked questions (FAQ's) on the website and regular progress updates on 'The Wave'."

**Contact:** Steve Foster 291646





Joy Hollister



Di Smith

## New directors

The council's two new directors took up their posts in early March.

Joy Hollister began her new position as director for Adult Social Care & Housing and Di Smith started as Director of Children's Services. We will be interviewing both directors in the next edition of The Channel.

## A Halpin hand!

Meet Andy Halpin – the newest recruit to the Occupational Therapy Initial Response Squad, based at Montague House Kemptown.

Andy, who was made redundant from a property development company last year, is delighted with his new job as an Equipment Technician delivering equipment and fitting simple adaptations such as grab rails and toilet frames for people with long term physical disabilities.

Andy said, "Even something simple - like providing a chair raiser so someone can get in and out of a chair by themselves - can make such a difference. It's effective and that feels good. It also frees up the Occupational Therapy Assistants to see the people with more complex needs – they're the ones who do the 'real' work."

The new service supports the recent government initiative 'Our Help, Our Care, Our Say' which promotes independence and gives people more control over the services they receive.

Stacy Deane, Senior Occupational Therapist explained, "People are often best at identifying their own needs and solutions. This scheme is designed to enable people to do just that. It also means that waiting times have been reduced to within one to two weeks, whereas before, people could be waiting months."

Contact: 296256



Andy fitting a bath lift

## THE CHANNEL...

The quarterly magazine for all staff. If you have any ideas for stories, please contact Nicki Tarr 291360 or Tina Perrett 291213

Designed inhouse by the council's Graphic Design Team  
<http://www.graphicdesignteam.org.uk>



# Wave of change

This spring, the new version of our intranet will be launched. The new Wave will run in parallel with the existing one for at least six months with clear links on the old home page to sections that have already moved.

The first new section to be launched is called **People First** and is where staff can go as a first stop for Human Resources (HR) advice and information. ICT and Communications have worked hard to make it more user friendly with even more comprehensive HR and learning and development information.

**People First** includes sections on: Learning at Work, Employee Matters, Managing Teams, Well Being and Safety and Job Opportunities. It represents the first part of the HR customer contact strategy.

Shaun Rafferty, Head of HR said, "Staff have done a brilliant job with the redesign of this essential tool. I look forward to seeing People First and the other new sections on Finance, ICT and Procurement – which I understand are being launched over the coming months."

For the foreseeable future, Lotus Notes will continue to be available to staff to enable access to key areas, such as Clients of Concern, Safety Management and Team Planning.  
**Contact:** Shaun Rafferty 291290.



## Les and colleagues Step To It!

When Les Mamoany, a Day Centre Officer working with Adults with Learning Disabilities was invited to train as a 'Step To It' Healthwalk Leader, he was a bit sceptical and wondered what made the scheme so special. Les, who attended the training with his colleagues (pictured), was surprised by some of the facts he learnt. "It was a real eye opener to find out that over 80% of adults with a learning disability do less than the recommended exercise," he said. "Often they don't get the opportunity, or don't realise how good for you exercise can be."

The scheme uses a specially designed pack to encourage walking with a health purpose and motivate people to get fitter. As well as training the six day service staff pictured, the Step To It scheme will also train twelve people with learning disabilities to become Assistant Healthwalks Leaders.

Judith Pride, the Healthwalks Co-ordinator said: "This is a great example of different directorates

working closely together to promote activity and health for people with learning disabilities."  
**Contact:** Judith Pride 292564



**From left - right:** Les Mamoany, Ann Sheeran, Liz Evans, Heidi North, Heather Ellis and Carol Le Page. Les and Ann are from Buckingham Road Day Care Centre and Liz and Carol from Wellington House Day Care Centre. Heidi and Heather are from Avondale (Grace Eyre Foundation).

# All that wood and how we coped!

When hundreds of tonnes of wood washed up on Brighton and Hove beaches it took many residents by surprise, but not seafront officers who had been tracking the unusual flotsam since the 'Ice Prince' sank off the coast of Devon days before.

"We were prepared, ready and waiting," said Seafront Officer Viki Miller. "Our main priority was to keep the public informed and safe. Signs were put up straight away to let people know what was happening, and to warn them not to touch the wood."

As soon as the wood was washed up there was a site inspection and risk assessment every day – and a stream of questions from the public. Viki said: "It became quite a tourist attraction!"

The seafront team have been busy supervising work to restore the beaches to their original condition. "The beach has been churned up quite badly by the removal vehicles, but we're working hard to get it looking good by the Spring."

Contact: Viki Miller 292716



## Brighton & Hove leads the way

Brighton & Hove is proud to be the first council in the South East to sign up to the Local Employment Partnership - a national initiative run by the Department for Work & Pensions. The programme has been carefully designed to support the council's commitment to employ a more diverse workforce that reflects the local labour market.

Two year employment positions across the council will soon be available for local long term unemployed residents and school leavers aged eighteen and above. Accredited training and support, including pre-employment training and an internal mentoring scheme, will be provided to help candidates stay in their placement. At the end of two years, candidates will be given help to find a job either within the council or externally. The position can then be filled by another person.

In the first phase, a number of ring fenced jobs from across the council will be made available towards summer 2008. Further phases will increase this number up to 80 positions a year. Shaun Rafferty, Head of HR, said: "The Local Employment Partnership will enable us to tap into the hidden potential of the local population. We're proud to be the first council in the South East to sign up – it shows we're forward thinking and committed to supporting local disadvantaged people into meaningful work."



## Revealing All: Nicky Alldis

Nicky is Manager of the Systems Administration Team who support systems used by the Revenues, Benefits and Access Services teams within Customer Services. She has worked for the council for seven years.

**Best thing about your job** Combining technical, people and project skills with innovation and playing an active part to improve services through technology.

**Worst thing about your job** Trying to understand what a 'hereditament' is! The job is what you make of it - there is nothing that I won't try and embrace.

**What keeps you in your job?** The incredible team I work with, they inspire me! Being valued and having a dynamic and supportive manager.

**Favourite film & album** Films: Heart & Souls, Fried Green Tomatoes and Finding Nemo. Album: Joshua Tree, U2

**Fave book** Living, Loving & Learning by Leo Buscaglia and the Velveteen Rabbit, by Margery Williams.

**Your heroes** We all have the potential to be a hero; my greatest influence in life is Rob, my Dad.

**Most embarrassing moment** ... And you want me to publicly re-live it! I think the usual suspects ... falling off flat shoes and pretending to break into a run, spinach in the teeth, socialising with that square of toilet paper stuck under your shoe, you know what I mean!

**Happiest memory** Thinking I was immortal as a child, knowing I was always right as a teenager, and realising both were untrue as an adult! Hearing my nephew's first breath.

**Most treasured possessions** Life, humour and loved ones, and any photo's capturing those moments.

**Favourite places** South Africa (where I was born), Brighton (where I live) and Paphos (where I will retire) all loved in equal shares.

**Best advice you ever got** Follow your heart and never be afraid to say sorry (and mean it!)

**Claim to fame** I have had poetry published in South Africa.

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## Meet your car share match...

Get along to the car share event this month and you might find yourself not only helping to reduce congestion and pollution, but saving money in petrol and parking costs too!

'Meet Your Car Share Match' will take place on Wednesday 26 March from 12.30 to 1.45pm in Training Room 1, Kings House. The event has been organised for potential car buddies to meet up and compare journeys – and enjoy some free sandwiches!

To access the scheme go to [www.journeyon.co.uk/bhccstaffcarshare](http://www.journeyon.co.uk/bhccstaffcarshare) and login details of your usual journeys.

Contact: Helen Marshall 293860

