

Hello!

Welcome to the seventh newsletter from the Lambeth GP Food Co-operative. There's plenty of exciting news and updates from our latest activities, as well as some personal reflections and a chance to get to know our team.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. If you have any ideas for future stories or want any more information please get in touch with us by email gpfoodcoop@gmail.com, and don't forget to keep up-to-date with our activities through Twitter [@gpfoodcoop](https://twitter.com/gpfoodcoop).



NEWSLETTER – MAY 2016

Gordon kept an eye on the cash box as the money rolled in at King's College Hospital (KCH) last month when we began selling our produce to staff and patients. Gordon, Millicent and Daphne are patients from Corner Surgery on Coldharbour Lane. They all helped make our stall at the Spice of Life restaurant a roaring success, where we have been supported by Lisa, David and the Medirest team since we began delivering this part of the Lambeth GP Food Co-op's work.

We sold everything that we had grown. The response from hospital staff was overwhelming – it was like the first day of the January sales! It was if they had not seen a kale leaf or a tomato before in their lives! Will was in his operating scrubs and, having come straight from the operating theatre, was deeply upset that he had no cash on him to buy beetroot tops. Maybe we need to start taking credit cards! Will, if you are reading this, you can pay us next time you see us for the cabbages I gave you!

On the last Thursday of each month we will be running a stall at KCH. This activity in itself represents co-operation in the NHS in action. It involves scores of people to make it work successfully. These include Dani the Medirest driver who collects all the produce from participating GP surgeries and brings it to the Medirest Kitchen at KCH. Barry, the KCH volunteer directs people from the Hambleton entrance to the stall in the restaurant, helping to increase the flow of potential customers. Hilda chats to prospective new Co-op members as they take their new purchases away. Gordon watches the money!

Our next stall is on Thursday 26th May from 11am until 2pm, in the Spice of Life restaurant at KCH, in the Hambleton wing.

On Tuesday 17 May we attended the launch of the national report on Gardens and Health which highlighted the Lambeth GP Food Co-op's work. We were delighted to have an opportunity to say a few words about our achievements so far and plans for the future. The event was attended by Dr Sarah Wollaston MP, Chair of the House of Commons Health Select Committee as well as the Minister of State for Public Health, Jane Ellison MP.

Next month the Lambeth GP Food Co-op will be hosted by the British Medical Association as part of the BMA/ Chelsea Fringe. We have been invited to deliver a seminar on Thursday 9th June from 4.30-6.30pm. On Saturday 18th June we will be back at the BMA to talk about our work and run a stall. I hope Gordon is free to join us as I need someone to keep an eye on the cash box!

Ed Rosen, Project Director, Lambeth GP Food Co-op

Spotlight Member – Elizabeth Harrington

Elizabeth is a founder member of the Lambeth GP Food Co-op having joined the project from Streatham High Surgery, where she is a patient, in spring 2013. Elizabeth and Gill Judson created a flourishing garden at Gracefield Gardens which continues to welcome patients and staff.

The Care Quality Commission awarded Streatham High Surgery the highest ranking of 'Outstanding' in November 2014. The surgery's support and involvement with the Lambeth GP Food Co-op was given special mention in the inspection report. Elizabeth was interviewed by the inspector who was deeply impressed with her experience in linking gardening and well-being.

Elizabeth is a lead gardener at the Lambeth GP Food Co-op site at Norwood Road as well as Gracefield Gardens.

Elizabeth said, "I have found it a huge pleasure to be part of the Lambeth GP Food Co-Op and work at Gracefield Gardens. Since it receives limited sunshine, we are concentrating on growing herbs there, alongside the strawberries, blackcurrant bushes and other fruit that was put in when we started the project. At present we are also raising broad beans, lettuces and tomatoes - and I was delighted to see that the pumpkin seeds sown a couple of weeks ago have started sprouting."

Photograph below left: LGPFC Board members Maryam Zonouzi, Dr Raj Mitra from Lambeth Walk Surgery and Mayor of Lambeth, Councillor Donatus Anyanwu

Below right: GP Food Co-op participants at Jennie Lee House Garden



GP Food Co-op's first market stall is a great success!

On Thursday 28 April, Lambeth GP Food Co-op, in partnership with Medirest, ran the first market stall at Denmark Hill following the launch event on NHS Sustainability Day back in March.

The cooperative is the first of its kind in the NHS. The co-op have been busy growing and harvesting their produce over the recent weeks, which enabled them to display a great array of nutritious, colourful, fresh, locally grown produce on the stall. Produce on sale included kale, cabbage, beetroot, herbs and lettuce.

The market stall went down well with staff and visitors, with all produce being sold. Not only was there interest in the produce, but nine people also expressed an interest in learning more about the Lambeth GP Food Co-op in general!

As the market stall was so successful, it will be a regular event at Denmark Hill, happening once a month over the summer. So if you're in the area then do drop by and pick up some great produce!



Left: Lambeth GP Food Co-op Members, supporters and guests at the launch of the partnership with Medirest at Kings College Hospital, 24 March 2016

Don't forget to check out our website where you can stay up to date with all the latest news and events from the Lambeth GP Food Cooperative! Just log on to:

<http://lgpfc.co.uk>

Hello friends of the Lambeth GP Food Co-op!

My name's Robbie Puddick, I'm 25, originally from Hampshire but currently reside in East Dulwich in South London, and I'll be undertaking an internship with the Lambeth GP Food Co-op until September. I'm currently studying a Masters in International Public Health Nutrition at the University of Westminster, the course combines food science and nutrition concepts with understanding policy, food security and health promotion. I am undertaking the course part-time over 2 years and also work for the NHS as a Rehab Support Worker for the Southwark Rapid Response team. Essentially the role of the team is to rehabilitate patients within the borough that are at risk of being admitted into hospital. This is achieved by implementing exercise programmes within their homes to improve their independence, mobility and ensure they remain in the comfort and security of their own home.

One of my primary interests within my degree is the focus on reducing food waste and maximising agricultural production to increase food security. Only 53% of the food that the UK consumed in 2015 was produced within our shores and I feel that with an ever expanding population and global political instability, returning the UK to a state of self-sufficiency will be a priority. An initiative like the GP food co-op is a wonderful way to encourage people to learn about gardening, food and nutrition as well as improving social integration and community cohesion. The GP Food Co-op will be a great compliment to my studies as it focuses on some core modules within my course and being in contact with people that are benefiting from a genuinely unique public health initiative will only amplify my skills as I look to progress throughout my career.

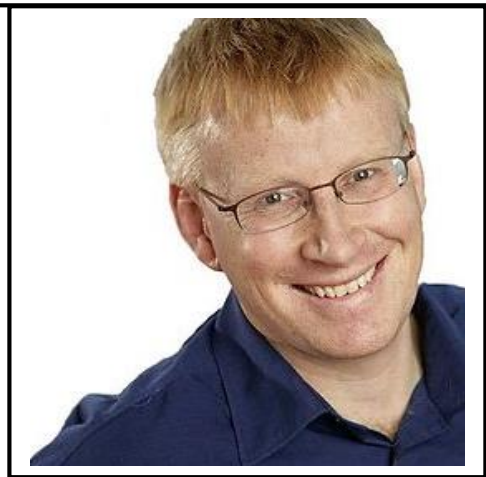
I am very excited to start my work with Ed and the team and hope that I can be a valuable addition as we look to improve people's lives throughout the borough!

I hope to meet you all very soon.

Robbie Puddick

Guidelines for Therapeutic Gardening

What gets you flowing? I'm talking well-being, not urology. Flow, according to my positive psychology friends, is a type of happiness, a state of absorption even, where you're fully immersed in a pleasing activity, such that you may lose track of time. Flow is about being totally engaged with what you're doing – in the moment or in the time zone – and it's generally after rather than during the experience that you appreciate the pleasure it brings. Active recreation is known to be more satisfying and rewarding than passive leisure, and what puts most people in the flow is gardening.



I've often thought gardening should be on prescription. It gets you away from the four-walled prison of home and work, puts you in touch with nature, the four seasons and the rhythm of life, gets your hands dirty and gives you an enormous sense of achievement and joy in watching something grow and nurturing it. It can provide cheap and sustainable food in a recession, it connects you with other enthusiasts, it's great for your health and it's surprisingly good exercise.

All this has doubtless occurred to the founders of the Lambeth GP Food Co-op, an idea so brilliant and simple that it won 'Best Sustainable Food Initiative' at the 2013 NHS Sustainability Day Awards. The Co-op's business case is that it will make money by growing and producing food for sale to local NHS hospitals. How? By growing it in existing spaces and gardens of GP surgeries across the London Borough of Lambeth. It joins up with Lambeth residents in creating gardens in partnership with GPs and their staff, and so everyone works collaboratively, learning new skills, producing food and contributing to community well-being.

With support from NHS Lambeth and Lambeth Council (the keepers of public health), the project offers free training and support and is open to everyone, meaning anyone in Lambeth has an opportunity to learn how to grow food. No previous gardening experience is necessary and you don't need to have a garden at home to join in. And, of course, by growing and selling food locally, it's great for the environment and makes a small contribution to the tough NHS carbon-emission reduction targets that will be very punitive for hospitals if not met. Why source fruit and vegetables from across the UK or even abroad when GPs and their patients are growing them for you?

I've been a fan of social prescribing for a while, where people are introduced to art, a new hobby, company and support to get them through their lives rather than medicalisation. Moving, talking, doing and reflecting, glue a community together and group gardening ticks all the boxes. But I like it most because, in an age of competitive tendering in the NHS which very few GPs want to do or believe will work, it shows the power of cooperation and collaboration, and the kindness and shared purpose that is at the heart of the NHS. It's open to anyone in Lambeth, and for those with long term physical and mental health problems, or those just isolated, lonely or bored, the benefits could be huge. It could also put some well needed creative buzz into brow-beaten GP surgeries. Offer the CQC inspector a home-grown carrot for his troubles.

You can never escape our innate competitiveness – will the individual practices share or protect their prize marrow growing tips? – but my guess is that when word gets out that waiting rooms are emptying as folk disappear to the practice garden, this initiative will spread across the NHS like wild organic tomatoes. Well done to the Lambeth GP Food Co-op.

Dr Phil Hammond
Broadcaster and GP