

RETREAT NEWS

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A FIRST FOR THE ACORN PROGRAMME

The Acorn Programme, a specialist treatment programme for women at The Retreat in York, is the first place to achieve accreditation by the Community of Communities (C of C) - a standards-based quality improvement network which brings together Therapeutic Communities (TCs) in the UK and internationally.

C of C is part of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Centre for Quality Improvement and works in partnership with the Association of Therapeutic Communities (ATC), the Charterhouse Group (ChG), the Planned Environment Therapy Trust (PETT), The European Federation of Therapeutic Communities (EFTC) and the Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA).

The goal of the C of C is to develop specialist service standards in an annual consultation process with members. It has for 5 years organised an annual review process for member organisations, which has been focused on setting and raising standards in the services.

C of C has just completed its first full accreditation exercise. The first Community to achieve accreditation is the Acorn Programme at The Retreat. The Acorn Programme is a TC for women, which has been open for about 10 years. The Retreat itself has a place in the history of TC's, as its work in the early 1800's is seen as the first example of a Mental Health Care organisation operating on the principles of respect, trust and openness which characterise TC's.

Chris Holman, Medical Director of the Acorn Programme, says: 'This is a huge achievement for our staff and our residents, who have all worked together to create a treatment setting which meets the highest standards. We proud to be a TC, committed to helping people change in an atmosphere of respect and mutual support; to be the first organisation accredited by the C of C shows that others believe we are doing that well. Accreditation will give residents and their carers, and referring organisations, confidence that we offer the best standard of care.'

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