

# Group News

## Mentaur Group | Newsletter

October 2013



mentaur  
caring with commitment



## CONGRATULATIONS!

**Isabel Melo has been shortlisted as a finalist for the Great East Midlands Care Awards 2013, in the **Care Innovator** category and the **Outstanding Contribution to Social Care** category**

**Lavanda Villa has been shortlisted as a finalist for the Great East Midlands Care Awards 2013, in the **Putting People First** category**

### Isabel Melo and Lavanda Villa shortlisted as finalists

#### The Great East Midlands Care Awards 2013

Mentaur will be represented at The Great East Midlands Care Awards 2013 with 3 finalists: Isabel Melo, Group Operations Director and Lavanda Villa, a Mentaur residential unit for people with Autism Spectrum Disorders, were recently shortlisted as finalists in the 'Care Innovator', the 'Outstanding contribution to Social Care' and the 'Putting People First' categories.

The Great British Care Awards are a series of regional events throughout England, intended to celebrate excellence across the care sector. As stated on the award's website: "The purpose of the awards is to pay tribute to those individuals who have dem-

onstrated outstanding excellence within their field of work".

The Great East Midlands Awards are recognized throughout the U.K., having received support from across the social care sector, including the Department of Health, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), Ceretas, the English Community Care Association (ECCA), the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and the National Skills Academy and Skills for Care.

The awards winners will be revealed on October 18th at the Belfry Hotel, Nottingham, in a gala event with all the finalists.

## Great East Midlands Care Awards

Mentaur Ltd. shortlisted as a finalist in the following categories:

- Care Leadership Award - Isabel Melo
- The Outstanding Contribution to Social Care Award - Isabel Melo
- The Putting People First Award - Lavanda Villa

2013  
Winners to be announced  
at: 18th October 2013

## Newsflash

- Mentaur is now on Facebook
- and Linked In

Mentaur is now on Facebook and Linked In. We have created and updated our social web pages and are now publishing relevant and new information regarding learning disabilities, autism, dementia and mental health online.

Join us or Like us at:

[www.facebook.com/pages/Mentaur-Ltd](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mentaur-Ltd)  
[www.linkedin.com/company/Mentaur-Ltd](http://www.linkedin.com/company/Mentaur-Ltd)

### Attitude Magazine first edition

The first edition of 'Attitude', Mentaur's redesigned users of service magazine, is now out. The talented users of Mentaur Day Opportunities Resource Centre (MDORC) were central in driving us through this exciting read of new experiences, achievements and activities! May we all aspire to the same marvellous 'Attitude' endowed on this group of amazing people!

### Mentaur awarded Business Project of the year

In May Mentaur was presented the Business 'Project of the Year' award by 'As Noticias', the main Portuguese publication in the U.K.. At their 5th annual gala held at a prominent hotel in London, the publication gathered together a wide variety of Portuguese personalities who have distinguished themselves beyond borders. Isabel Melo, Mentaur Group Operational Director received the award on the company's behalf.

# ☆ Awards and Celebrations

## ☆ Our Awards:

2002

Mentaur awarded the 'Investor in People Certificate' by the Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce

2007

Isabel Melo awarded 'The Talent Award' in Portugal

2008

Mentaur - Finalist at the Northamptonshire Business Excellence Awards

2011

Aurora House - Finalist at the National Dementia Care Awards in the Best Interior Dementia Design category

2012

Isabel Melo awarded 'The prize for Entrepreneurial Innovation in the Portuguese Diaspora' in Portugal

Stoke House is recognised for excellence by Northants PCT



Image: Some of the winners

2013

Lavanda Villa - Finalist at Laing & Buisson Independent Specialist Care Awards in the category of Autism Specialist Services

Mentaur distinguished as the 'Business Project of the Year' by 'As Notícias'



Image: Isabel Melo receiving the award

## Mentaur celebrates 25 years 'Caring with commitment' since 1988

In June 2013 Mentaur celebrated the 25th anniversary of its existence.

Over these 25 years the company has prospered and grown to provide a service with 10 residential units and 2 day resource centres in Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Leicestershire.

The company's commitment to providing superior and specialised services has been the main focus since its creation and motivates the entire Mentaur team. A person-centred

approach and focus on personalisation have also been hallmarks of the service and allow the company to gain status and recognition.

25 years on, Mentaur is still looking for new and inventive ways to improve its services with continuous efforts to disseminate knowledge through conferences and research.

# Celebrating 25 Years

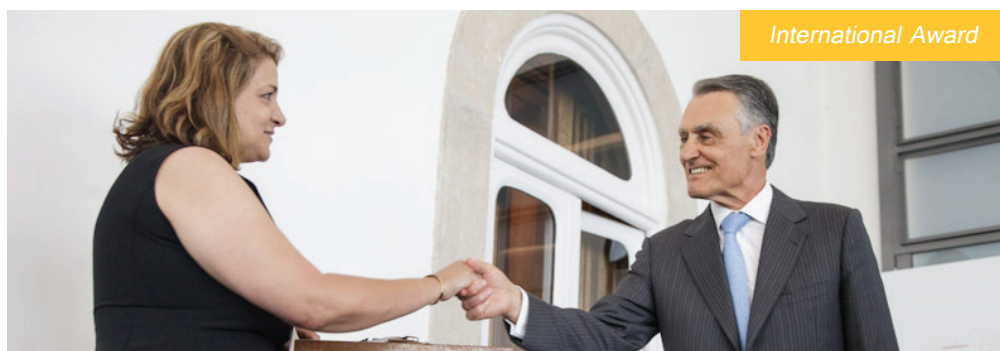


International Award

Image: Isabel Melo receiving the 'Talent Award', 2007



Image: Mentaur team at the Dementia Care Awards, 2011



International Award

Image: Isabel Melo receiving the prestigious International Award, 2012 from the Portuguese President, 2012



## Conferences and Research

### Mentaur Group international conference on Personalisation June 15<sup>th</sup>, Porto | Portugal

Image: The venue - Fundação Cupertino Miranda



On 15<sup>th</sup> June, Mentaur hosted an international conference on personalisation at the Fundação Cupertino Miranda in Porto, Portugal.

Introduced by Daniel Bessa, a Portuguese ex-minister of Economy, the conference explored the views of different countries on personalisation in social care.

The positive feedback from this event inspires the Mentaur Group to continue to organise further similar conferences and to enable the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

All through the afternoon participants were invited to attend one of the 3 workshops available:



Image: Daniel Bessa opening

Isabel Melo, Mentaur Group Operational Director, discussed the changes in the U.K. social care sector that led to the implementation of personalisation. José Luís Cuesta, President of the Spanish Association of Autism Professionals (AETAPI), highlighted some of the most recent breakthroughs and obstacles faced by the Spanish in this area.

The afternoon session had two new seminar presentations. Berta Granja - International Relations Co-ordinator of ISSSP (Porto), gave an insight into the University's role on personalisation. This was then followed by a talk on the impact of innovation and specialisation on the development of services by Herculano Castro, Operations Manager.



Image: Isabel Melo presentation



Image: José Luís Cuesta presentation



Image: José Luís Cuesta Workshop



Image: iBrandit workshop

New technologies applied to personalisation, by iBrandit



Image: Jovita Vieira workshop

Person Centred Approach and Domiciliary Support in the United Kingdom, by Jovita Vieira (Mentaur Community Support - MCS)

and:

Guide of Indicators of Quality of Life in people with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorders) by José Luís Cuesta (Director of the Autism Adult Services in Spain)



## Conferences and Research

### 10<sup>th</sup> International Congress AUTISM-EUROPE

Oral presentation by Herculano Castro



The AUTISM-EUROPE International Congress was held at Budapest between 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

In it's 10<sup>th</sup> edition, the 3 day Con-

gress highlighted recent developments ranging across the field of autism and including genetics, diagnosis, early intervention, treatment, education, support, employment, rights and polices.

Following the 9<sup>th</sup> Autism-Europe international congress, held in Catania in 2010, where Mentaur presented an innovative design of an autism-friendly residential environment, the Group was again represented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Autism-Europe congress by Herculano Castro, Group Operations Manager and Autism Lead for the organization. The presentation on the development of an objective tool to measure quality of life outcomes for people with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) took place on Day 2 at the Quality of Life Symposium and generated a great deal of interest and enthusiasm amongst the delegates. To know more about Herculano Castro's presentation, see the abstract summary below.

For further information on the congress programme details, visit the congress website at: [www.autismcongress2013.eu](http://www.autismcongress2013.eu) or visit Mentaur's website ([www.mentauruk.com](http://www.mentauruk.com)).



Images: Herculano Castro oral presentation



Images: Herculano Castro oral presentation

### Abstract Summary

#### Title:

Developing an objective tool to measure quality of life outcomes of people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

#### Abstract Summary:

Validated and reliable tools to measure the quality of life outcomes of individuals with ASD are in short supply. The difficulty in assessing these outcomes in persons with ASD from a subjective perspective, make it necessary to find valid objective quality of life indicators.

Mentaur has adjusted and validated an instrument made up of an objective guide of indicators to use to assess quality of life outcomes for persons with ASD, making it U.K. specific.

Application of the tool is currently being piloted by Autism West Midlands across their services and we believe there will be unique features to this tool which will surmount, for example, the serious communication difficulties which persons with ASD often have and will allow a comprehensive and objective overview on quality of life outcomes.

Mentaur aims to provide this tool free of cost

to all professionals and organisations who want to introduce quality of life based models in advancing and enriching the quality of support for persons with ASD.

#### Authors:

Herculano Castro<sup>1</sup>, Shekhar Mukherji<sup>1</sup>, Jose Luis Cuesta<sup>2</sup>, Maria Merino<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mentaur Group

<sup>2</sup>Autismo Burgos

## Conferences and Research

### ‘Autism and technology’

Research article by Shekhar Mukherji and Herculano Castro

*“In spite of great improvements in early diagnosis and interventions, most children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are unlikely to live independently when they reach adulthood. Research on novel computer-based interventions with the goal of promoting social skills has proven that these can play a crucial role in developing activities aimed at increasing pro-social behaviours such as collaboration and coordination, augmented appreciation for social activities, and providing individuals with novel forms of expression. The past ten years have seen a great increase in the number of computer-based interventions”.*

The full article is available at [www.mentauruk.com](http://www.mentauruk.com) on the ‘Conferences & Research’ section.

### About the Authors:



**Shekhar Mukherji**  
Director



**Herculano Castro**  
Group Operations Manager  
Autism Lead and Research Co-ordinator

### The ASD Multitouch Project at a glance

#### International project for people with ASD

Mentaur is currently involved in an international project that aims to develop a multi-touch based platform for people with ASD of all ages and which allows related stakeholders to be actively involved in the therapy/support process.

The products to be developed in the ASD Multitouch project include:

- + A set of interactive applications for touch-screen platforms designed to improve the skills of the people that use them. During use, the applications automatically collect and send to the Web portal various usage statistics, which can then be later analysed;
- + An expanded framework that provides support features for the applications that run through it, and which facilitates future new software additions via a plug-in system;
- + A Web portal that offers a number of services to support the above products, such as storage and consultation of the collected usage statistics for analysis by professionals;
- + Social networking facilities integrated in the Web portal, which allow the exchange of information between the involved stakeholders and encourage community building;

The ASD Multitouch project will also create several versions of the software, targeting various platforms like Touch-screen tables running software under the x86 architecture and Windows 7 operating system and Mobile

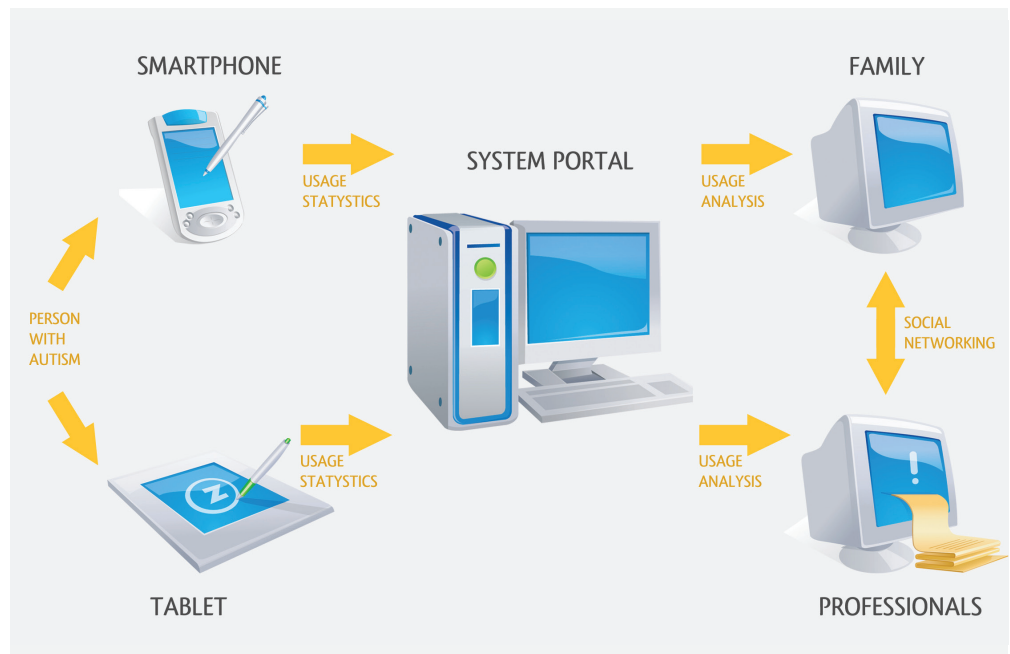


Image: ASD Multitouch project

platforms, namely ARM-based iOS and Android operating systems.

The ASD Multitouch project will also offer a complete solution for computer based ASD therapy/support to which no direct equivalent exists:

- + It is touch-screen based, a technology that very few other therapeutic softwares use;
- + Its applications are designed to develop skills in several areas (social, motor, emotional, language, etc.); whereas most other solutions are stand-alone applications that work only on the skill;
- + It collects detailed statistics that professionals can use to develop effective support plans;

+ It is expandable as its plug-in framework allows for new applications to be added to the library at any time and work seamlessly with existing ones;

+ The Web portal system allows all involved stakeholders to monitor progress in their tasks, to communicate with each other, and to post information regarding their own experiences.

## Corporate News

Learning Disabilities Week 2013 was celebrated from 19<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> August throughout the U.K.. This year, Mentaur contributed to the festivities with an event involving users of its services and their relatives.

On 21<sup>st</sup> August, service user and staff representatives from all Mentaur residential units and day opportunities resource centres gathered at Northampton Racecourse to attend 'A day at the park'. This celebratory event incorporated music, games and picnic and was kicked off by Martin, a teacher of music at MDORC. With musical instruments and songs in the background, the sports coach Lynne started a series of traditional team games. Mentaur staff member, Rita Baptista, engaged others with magic tricks and balloon modelling.

Once the activities were finished, it was time



Image: Balloons being released at the event

to gather around for a picnic.

To finish the festivities, balloons with personal messages attached were released by the users of service and staff, and found their way upwards and away. A few days later, a lovely phone message from Cambridgeshire

confirmed the arrival of one of the balloons there!

Before leaving the Racecourse, there was time for some short speeches thanking every one for attending, organising and celebrating such an incredible day.

### Read it in first hand...

On August 21<sup>st</sup>, in order to celebrate Learning Disabilities Week, Mentaur held an event at the Racecourse for as many of their service users as could attend, and their families.

It was a beautiful sunny day with a pleasant breeze and we all gathered by a shady tree to enjoy ourselves. Martin brought his guitar and led everyone in his favourite songs with lots of help from service users who played tambourines, maracas and other instruments. At the same time, a member of Mentaur staff did magic tricks and created

balloon animals and flowers for those who wanted them. I had a lovely red flower!

There was lots of chat between residents from the different houses and between the family members who came. One family's German Shepherd was a great attraction!

At lunchtime everyone settled down for a picnic, which we all enjoyed – The muffins were delicious!

Throughout the morning some of the staff had been blowing up balloons, to which they attached cards with messages from the ser-

vice users, staff and families, and after the picnic we let them go. Some got caught in the trees, but hopefully were carried away later by the wind. After this, everyone gathered together and Isabel Melo, Mentaur Operational Director, and some of the service users made speeches thanking those who had organised the event. It was then time to go home.

I hope everyone enjoyed themselves as much as I did!

Stella Watts  
(Parent)

## Mentaur Day Opportunity Resource Centre (MDORC) open day

### Mentaur users of service show their creative talents



Image: MDORC entrance

On March 22<sup>nd</sup> MDORC opened its doors to the community in an interesting open day event with its users of service.

A sign boldly declaring Mentaur's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary welcomed all the attendees to the open day. Inside the centre a display of arts and crafts, from paintings to collages, coloured the space. Small crafts were available as gifts and were picked up by many.

The event gathered together staff, users of service and their relatives, as well as members of the community. In a relaxed environment the users of service showed off their creative talents.

Refreshments were offered to bring to a close a different and exciting day.



## Corporate News

### MCS easy access

#### New online version of MCS questionnaires

Aiming to make its services more accessible, as well as environmental friendly, MCS has developed online versions of some of the company's forms for staff and clients.

If you wish to make a referral to MCS or submit a satisfaction questionnaire, it is now

possible to do so from the comfort of your own home.

Despite this change, users who may not be computer literate or have difficulties in accessing the web will be able to use the paper versions of these documents as well as get assistance in filling them, if required.

For MCS it is important that information reaches everyone in the best way possible for them and we are able to offer these flex-

ible options.

If you would like more information about MCS, or need to make a referral, please get in touch using the following contacts:

. Telephone: 01604 777 856

. Email: [info@mcs-services.co.uk](mailto:info@mcs-services.co.uk)

### MCS will be present at 'Transitions Big Event 2013'

#### Presenting MCS services to the community

The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Northamptonshire County Council 'Transition Big Event' will happen on 11th November at The Park Inn in Northampton.

For people with disabilities and learning difficulties aged 14 to 25 and their families, the event aims to present people with choices on services and different types of support.

From 9:30am to 7:00pm a wide range of services and providers will present and discuss their services with all attendees. MCS will be present to give out information and answer questions.

The event will also host workshops in drama, film making and life support planning for young people and workshops for parents

and carers. On the main stage, 'Northamptonshire's Got Talent' will show ten minute variety performances each hour throughout the day.

This will be a free event with no prior need for booking.

For further information about the event, please see the Northampton County Council Transition Programme.

## Homes News

### Lavanda Vila certified by the National Autistic Society 'Certificate of Quality Autism Provision'

Since 14<sup>th</sup> May, Lavanda Villa, one of our specialist care homes for autism in Kempston, Bedford, has become a certified Autism Specialist Service, accredited with the Certificate of Quality Autism Provision by the NAS Autism Accreditation Programme.

The Accreditation Award panel report, complimented Lavanda Villa on their development and planning and on their imagination and endeavour in the well planned use of buildings and an autism friendly environment.

The key aims of Autism Accreditation are to provide a unified standard of excellence in both policy and practice, presenting a systematic framework for continuous self-examination and development, and giving guidance and support to services, so that they can meet the established criteria required for accredited status.

The Autism Accreditation award provides a seal of quality and gives people peace of mind when choosing a service for a relative or friend.

If you wish to know more about Lavanda Villa, visit the Mentaur website at [www.mentauruk.com](http://www.mentauruk.com) in the 'Specialist Services' section.



Image: Lavanda Villa

### Evergreen House celebrates one year of service 'Caring with commitment'

On August 21<sup>st</sup> 2013, Evergreen House celebrated its first anniversary.

The people living in Evergreen House are young adults taking their first steps towards more independent ways of living.

Evergreen House also introduces a novel and unique scheme that enables young people living there to benefit from having a tenancy agreement coupled with 24 hour specialist support regulated by CQC.

If you wish to know more about Evergreen House, visit the Mentaur website at [www.mentauruk.com](http://www.mentauruk.com) in the 'Specialist Services' section.

## Mentaur's series of workshops

### Workshops to celebrate Mentaur 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary

As part of the on-going actions to celebrate Mentaur's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Mentaur will be organising a series of workshops for the company's staff.

Between October and November, the workshops aim to cover a variety of themes within social care, promoting our acquired expertise, knowledge and experience by empowering people to get involved and to develop their individual skills.

Following each workshop, a summary of discussions will be produced and participants will be invited to provide feedback. Photos will be taken throughout the workshops. These materials will be cascaded through a newsletter in December 2013.

For further information on the workshops, please see the program below or contact Mentaur's Head Office.



Image: Workshops brochure detail

## Mentaur's contribution to EU professional future

### Placements for students in Social Work and Human Resources in Social Care

As part of the Group's commitment to the development of fresh graduate students, we embarked on a project to work in conjunction with European universities and provide placements for students who wish to pursue a career in Social Work or HR in the Social Care field.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme funds practical projects in the field of vocational education training and one of their initiatives is to give individuals work-related training abroad. The ERASMUS programme is similar, although it mainly concentrates on the European Higher Education Area and aims to foster innovation throughout Europe.

The aim of both programmes is to support and complement the activities of European Union members, to improve the quality of policies and training practices and to promote the co-operation of all those involved



Education and Culture DG

## Lifelong Learning Programme

Image: Leonardo da Vinci Programme logo

in the development of education and training.

In this year's second half Mentaur will be receiving 3 new interns in the field of Social Care. In the past years, the project has been a great success for both the company and the interns who have joined our team.

If you wish to know more about internship opportunities at Mentaur, please contact our Human Resources team at [hr@mentaur.ltd.uk](mailto:hr@mentaur.ltd.uk).