

Representing the voices of you, our service users

Swan Supported Housing Fun Day 2010



Go Grease Lightning!



Swan service users and residents performed in front of the crowds at the Princes Theatre in Clacton. With an audience of over 300 people, the cast treated them to a highly entertaining night, performing to the hit musical Grease. Read more on page 11.



Makaton Symbols:

Throughout our Swan Life editions, you will have noticed the use of these symbols.

These are known as Makaton symbols and are used for people with severe learning disabilities who cannot read. This is a nationally recognised language developed by the Makaton Charity. You will see these throughout each edition as we try to make the Swan Life accessible to as many service users as possible.



Supported Housing Fun Day 2

Improving Your Support Services 5

Supported Housing Residents 6

Generic Floating Support 8

Getting to Know Your Support Staff 9

LD Floating Support – Getting to Know You 10

Healthy Eating 12

More Stories and Info 13

Going Green 14

Useful Information 15

This Summer, we held our second annual Supported Housing Fun Day following the success of last year's event. Everyone really enjoyed themselves despite the event finishing earlier than planned due to the weather. See what over 280 service users had to enjoy inside this newsletter.



Team Kinetix at Supported Housing Fun Day

Singing in the rain- Swan's Supported Housing Fun Day



Staff and service users team work during games



Miriam (left) and her band members

This year's annual Swan Supported Housing Fun Day took place in Chancellor Park, Chelmsford. Over 280 service users were treated to a variety of entertainment including the fantastic aerial acrobatics group 'Team Kinetix' who were outstanding, Phoenix Leisure who provided laughs and inflatable games, falconry, football skills training and a dance performance from the Mencap Gateway Dance Group.

Following the success of last year's event, Swan aimed to make this year's event even bigger and better. The day, which went ahead on 13th August, brought together service users across the whole of Supported Housing with the aim to seek useful information and have a fun filled day.

A number of our partners attended the day too including Batias Independent Advocacy Service, The Dengie Project Trust, 4 Children, Essex Gay Men, Chelmsford College, Greenfields Community Housing,

Essex Police and the Fire service plus many more.

Miriam Ojera and her band joined us before the rain set in. Miriam is a resident of Swan House Foyer who produced an amazing singing performance with her band and did a fantastic job in entertaining the crowds.

Despite the event closing earlier than planned this year due to rain, service users seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves.



Falconry at the fun day

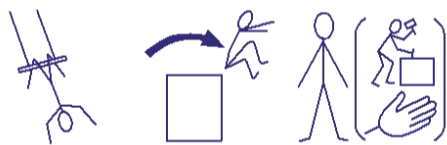


Hazel Wills, claiming her hairdressing voucher she won in the raffle

The fun day's variety of entertainment included a Falconry display arranged through Phoenix Leisure which you can see in this picture. This featured some amazing birds on show that were looked after by a trained professional.



Hazel Wills was the lucky winner of a Headlines hairdressing voucher at this year's Supported Housing Fun Day. This was one of many fantastic prizes that were won by other service users who took part in the raffle.



Team Kinetix in action

Team Kinetix aerial acrobatics group were fantastic this year, showing off their talents. In this display, fully trained professionals jumped over a group of service users to demonstrate their skills. Everyone was amazed by their performance.



Giant games arena



Mencap Gateway Dance Group



This year Swan was delighted to work in partnership with the Mencap Gateway Dance Group. Their learning disabilities dance team put on a fantastic show to a selection of music. Everyone who watched started dancing too. Well done to Peter Turrell, Jean Hunter and Claire Lucas who managed the group on the day and to all of the brilliant dancers.

It was great to see service users enjoying the clay pot making stall again this year. This was set up by Support Worker Stephen Park and his wife Dianne who take up this hobby in their spare time. Service users were able to make their own pottery and then paint the items. This was a very popular activity on the day.



Giant pub table football was one of the highlights of the day. This was a fantastic sideshow game that involved team work and football skills.



Other companies who contributed towards the day

Swan would like to thank all the other organisations who contributed to this memorable day. We would also like to thank Pizza Hut Colchester, Kim Wallis of Prime Time Recruitment, Headlines Hairdressing of Billericay, Cressing Temple, Cineworld, Wilkinsons and the Family Holiday Association who all kindly contributed towards the raffle gifts.

Swan would also like to say well done to Hazel Wills who once again produced an amazing card display and to Kelly Bickford who helped in the planning of the event and to everyone else who made this day possible.

Planning has already started for next year's event. We would like to get more of you involved. If you would like to help in making next year's event really special then talk to your Support Worker or Housing Officer.

'It was a great day. Shame about the weather but apart from that it was really good!' Kelly Bickford, Service User

5

Improving Your Support Services

Magic Pens Make Swan Digital

Swan's Supported Housing Team have introduced a new IT system designed by Capital Support that includes the introduction of digital pens.

The next time your support worker visits you they can make notes using these digital pens which automatically send secure information straight to our new system. Some of this information recorded can be shared with other agencies in order to improve the support and guidance available to you.

Shalene Brooker, Support Services Manager at Swan Housing commented, "Our Supported Housing Team provides support to a wide range of service users within their

homes. To meet the needs of our customers and ensure a high quality of service is delivered we are constantly exploring and investing in new leading edge technology available for remote working."

One of the best things about this new technology is that support staff can continue to focus on you without being restricted by lots of paperwork. Expect to hear more stories about this new system in the months to come.



Staff using new digital pens

Getting involved at Swan



There are lots of ways you can get involved at Swan so that you can make suggestions about your service. We now hold regular forums in several places around Essex. Forums are a great way of meeting other clients. They are



Recent Service User Forum in Harlow

also nice and relaxed to make you feel comfortable to have your say. If you would like to get involved, speak to your Support Worker or Supported Housing Officer. If

forums aren't for you, simply talk to your Support Worker or Housing Officer and give them your ideas about the service. We are always open to ideas!

Star resident completes Race for Life

Kay Jennings is a resident from Spencer House in Southend. This year she did something amazing and took part in the Race for Life charity run at Garrons Park in Southend. Thousands of women took part in a 5 kilometre run for Cancer Research. Everyone who took part wore the traditional pink colours for the event in a display of girl power. Kay, a Swan resident with learning disabilities, has been living at Spencer House for a couple of years now. This was the first time she had done anything like this.

What makes this achievement even more special is that Kay did it on one of the hottest days of the year.

Kay was supported on the day by her Supported Housing Officer at Swan, Emma Waldon and her Key Worker from Southend Council. The sponsorship money raised from this event is donated to Cancer Research UK. Swan would like to say a massive well done to Kay for her fantastic achievement!



Kay Jennings (centre) finishing the race

'This was for my dear mum Lucy! I can't wait to tell my sister, she will be very proud of me.'
Kay Jennings speaking after the race



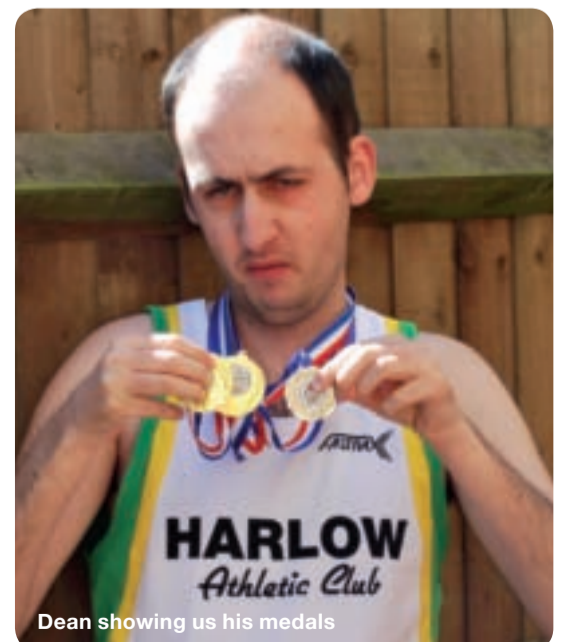
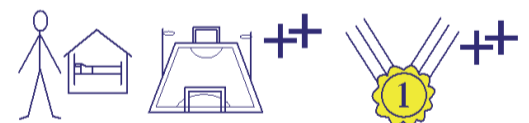
Going for Gold

This story highlights the incredible character of Dean Lee, a Swan resident at Home Mead in Harlow. Dean suffers from a muscle wasting disease. What makes this story so special is that Dean has shown great determination and strength in joining the local Harlow athletics group. But it doesn't stop there. Dean has proved to be one of the best athletes at the club. When we met him, Dean was full of pride and explained how he won a Gold medal in a 100m race and the Long Jump during Spring this year. He also took part at the national competitions held in Chelmsford earlier this year, receiving a medal for the most improved athlete. Dean has

been a member of the Harlow Athletics Club for nearly a year now and one of his favourite activities is the javelin throwing.

Congratulations to Dean for showing strength and determination to be a top athlete.

'I am so proud of what I've done that I even keep my medals up on my wall' Dean speaking during the visit



Dean showing us his medals

Young residents shine at the Princes Trust Awards



Four Swan House Foyer residents took part in a 12 week Princes Trust Development Programme during Spring this year.

The programme brought together many youngsters from across Essex. The aim of the programme was to help the young people take responsibility for themselves and to show them that they can shape their own future.

Parts of the programme involved team work placements and practical

skills courses. Some of Swan's residents worked in areas such as catering, printing, fitness and the building trade. A project team was also formed to re-decorate the Trenham Community Hall in Pitsea and everyone did a fantastic job.

Proud friends and family members made up the large audience that came to see the young people on their awards day.

Congratulations to all of our young residents including Bradley Hyde, Ellis Maginn, Charles Roskell and Cholie Searle and to the other young people in our communities who took part.

'This really is a remarkable day. I feel very proud to have accomplished this with these guys.' Bradley- Swan House Resident speaking at the awards ceremony



Young people and staff at awards ceremony

Dobson House Residents visit Castaways

Swan's Dobson House Shelter Scheme residents took part in an afternoon outing to Castaways in Pitsea earlier this year.

Castaways is a fish and chip restaurant in Pitsea that provides a lovely meal along with live entertainment. The event was arranged by their care company, Outlook Care, who helped them on the day.

If you would like to get involved in more activities in your area, speak to your, Floating Support Worker, Supported Housing Officer or Care Worker, who may be able to provide advice.



Residents outing to Castaways

A show of talent



Miriam at Gateway FM

Earlier this year, Miriam Ojera, a Swan Foyer Resident and new emerging talent agreed to go to the Gateway FM radio station in Basildon. Miriam Ojera answered questions from a group of children who attended from a local Secondary school. The children asked Miriam what it was like to be faced with the prospect of being homeless and what to do to seek help.

The group were treated to a singing performance from Miriam, who also performed at this year's Supported Housing Fun Day and at the Bas Fest. Miriam's singing has already been recognised at our Swan House Foyer as they got her involved in the recording of a new mobile ring tone for the site. The ringtone is now in use and is designed to be set to our resident's phones when the Foyer is trying to make contact with them.

John Hanley's Story

John Hanley



John lives in Tiptree in Essex and is aged 61. He has been suffering from alcoholism for over 15 years. Swan's Floating Support Service has been supporting him for over 2 years. John last had a drink in November 2009. His story highlights what people can achieve through support and personal determination.

John's problems started when his social drinking soon turned to heavy drinking which affected his work and family relationships. He then got into debt and lost his home and was left with nowhere to live with his daughter.

Both John and his daughter ended up in a night shelter. He then became an outsider to the rest of the world. Since his drinking habits got worse, John has had major health problems which

resulted in kidney failure and a real possibility of dying. Massive weight loss and blackouts added to his health problems.

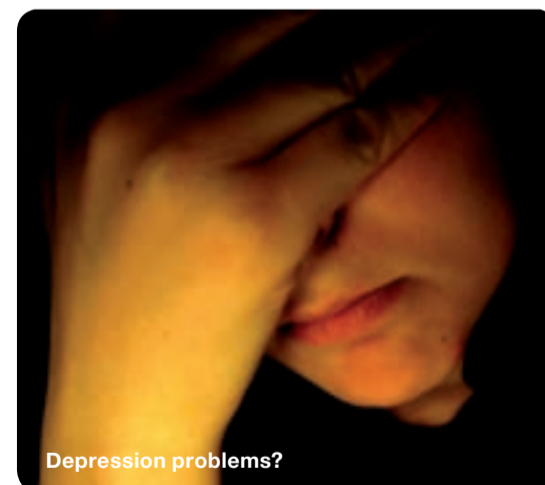
'Even if you feel lectured, it still pays to listen even if you do not want to hear it' John's advice to others

Thankfully John is now on the road to recovery. The April Centre in Colchester came to the rescue and helped John with somewhere to live. Swan then started to support John and helped him begin to build up his confidence again.

John's advice to others is to take the amount of drink consumed seriously and acknowledge when you have a problem then seek help. Drinking more is not the solution to the problem. We hope John's story encourages others to seek help if faced with the same problems.

'Do not wait until death's door before action' John's advice to others

Is depression keeping you in the dark?



Depression is one of the most common types of mental illness and can affect 5-10% of the entire population so it is important to remember you are not alone. We have put together a few basic tips on the next page to help readers facing depression take the necessary steps to overcoming this illness.

This information has been taken from the website www.helpguide.org. This site features really valuable information that you may want to look at if you are suffering from depression or know anyone else who is. Your support worker can help you seek advice or point you in the right direction if depression is holding you back.

Familiarise yourself with your support staff at Swan



Depression self-help tip 1: Cultivate supportive relationships

Getting the support you need plays a big role in lifting the fog of depression and keeping it away. Maintaining your close relationships and social activities are very important to your success.

Depression self-help tip 2: Get regular exercise

Exercise is a powerful tool for dealing with depression. In fact, studies show that regular exercise can be as effective as antidepressant medication at increasing energy levels and decreasing feelings of fatigue.

Depression self-help tip 3: Eat a healthy, mood-boosting diet

What you eat has a direct impact on the way you feel. Aim for a balanced diet of protein, complex carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables.



Gavin Cowlin,
Floating
Support
Team Leader,
Tendring



Michelle
Townsend,
Sustainment
Officer,
Tendring



Glen
McCarthy,
Supported
Housing
Officer



Steven Park,
Learning
Disabilities
Support
Worker

A Man of Artistic Talents



Meet Scott Greenhalgh, a Swan service user with learning disabilities who lives in Manningtree. Scott has been getting support from his support worker Amanda Noble for over a year and is doing really well. Amanda has helped Scott explore his job options. She also supports him with the day to day management of things in his life.

Scott is 22 years of age and has an amazing talent. He has the ability to produce fantastic art work and his highly detailed sketches are very impressive. We thought we would show our service users some of his work in this magazine.

Scott's drawings are inspired by Japanese cartoons and TV programmes and have a fantasy medieval theme. He attends the Level Best Art Cafe in Colchester every Thursday morning. This is a place that runs arts and cooking programmes. There are about 6 people in his class every week and Scott has been able to make friends this way. Scott has also learnt how to prepare work for public display. His excellent work is sometimes displayed in the café itself.

'Drawing has been a hobby of mine from an early age'
Scott Greenhalgh



Go Grease Lightning!!



During an amazing night in Spring this year, an audience of over 300 people watched the fantastic Grease Lightning Show in the Princes Theatre in Clacton.

The show included all the popular characters and songs from the 1978 hit movie. A London dance group also took part.

Two stars of the show included Paul Chittock, (playing Danny) and Sarah Corton, (playing Sandy) who is also Paul's partner. Paul and Sarah amazed the crowds with their stage dancing and acting. They were among many clients who took part in the play.

The drama group that Paul and Sarah are involved with is made up of about 20 people with learning disabilities.

They all have similar interests in acting and dancing. Paul and Sarah have made good friends through the group. They have been with them for about a year and a half.

The cast were given a standing ovation at the end of the show. A massive well done to Sarah and Paul and all of our other service users and residents who took part in this special occasion!

'We feel very proud of ourselves.'
Paul speaking about the show

'My favourite part was dancing to the song Summer Nights!'
Sarah Corton

'I felt so nervous before we started but I was so pleased once we did it!'
Sarah and her feelings about the show



Paul and Sarah as Danny and Sandy from Grease



Swan clients performing on the night

Did you know that a balanced diet of healthy foods can help your body and mind?

Why not try this delicious light snack? Crab cakes make a fantastic healthy snack and only take a short time to make. Ideal to eat when you don't have lots of time to make a large meal.



Crab Cakes Recipe:

Serves 2

This recipe can be found on the website www.goodtoknow.co.uk/recipes. Visit them for more great food ideas.

Cooking time:

10-15 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 can of drained crab meat
- 4 table spoons of bread crumbs
- 8 fresh basil leaves sliced
- 1/4 chopped white onion
- 2 spring onions finely chopped
- 1 egg
- 1 table spoon of salad cream
- Olive oil for frying

Instructions:

- 1) Place 2 table spoons of bread crumbs on a plate.
- 2) Now place all the remaining ingredients in a bowl and mix well. Heat a non stick pan on a medium heat. Make small size crab cakes and coat in the breadcrumbs on the plate.
- 3) Drizzle some olive oil in the pan and cook for 1-2 minutes each side and serve.



Some other interesting food facts that can help you improve your diet:

We thought we'd throw in some interesting facts about a range of super berries that you may want to know about!

Strawberries:

Like many other berries, strawberries contain high amounts of antioxidants that are effective in reducing risks of developing cancer, cardiovascular disease and inflammation-related diseases.

Blueberries:

A decent serving provides almost 25% of daily requirement for Vitamin C which is needed for the formation of collagen and to maintain healthy gums. It also helps in the absorption of iron and promotes a healthy immune system.

Redcurrants:

Redcurrants are rich in fibre, which helps the development of a healthy gut. It is rich in Vitamin C, with antioxidant properties. Apart from this, it fights especially against various forms of cancer, as well as helps in many specific everyday functions.





Brian Denton is a resident at Swan's Dobson House elderly shelter scheme. He has written a poem that describes his love for his wife, who is suffering from Dementia. Brian's wife, Pamela Denton now receives care. Brian is often supported to go and visit his wife. Brian's poem reflects on his personal experiences of his wife suffering from dementia. Swan would like to thank Brian for his touching contribution.

A poem by Brian Denton (Dobson House Resident)

When you meet someone that
is special,
It often turns to love,
This I've experienced,
And is usually in the hands of
The One above,

I've been married now for fifty years,
And I can honestly say,
I wouldn't change a thing I've done,
For anything you wish to name,

My wife lives apart from me
in another home,
She suffers from Dementia,
But is quite happy where she is,

I manage to see her quite often,
Thanks to my family and friends,
I'm quite happy here,
Because of the staff that God sends,

My wife loves her flowers,
And painting them is the way she
spends her hours,
All the work she's ever done is,
Constantly praised by everyone,

We realise that this is life,
But that's the way it is for man
and wife

By Brian Denton



Brian Denton and his wife Pamela

Health corner: Is dementia affecting a loved one in your life?



(Info from website: <http://www.nhs.uk/pathways/dementia>)

'People with dementia commonly experience problems with memory and the skills needed to carry out everyday activities. There are many different causes of dementia but Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause. Dementia is not a normal part of ageing. About 500,000 people in England have dementia and although it can occur at any age, it's more common in older people. About one in 20 people over 65 has dementia.'

Getting help:

Alzheimer's disease develops gradually and the illness may not always be obvious in the early stages.

Early signs and symptoms include:

- Regularly forgetting recent events, names and faces.
- Regularly misplacing items or putting them in odd places.
- Confusion about the time of day.
- Failing to recognise familiar objects or places.
- Problems finding the right words.
- Reduced judgement, for example, unaware of danger.
- Mood or behaviour problems such as apathy or irritability.
- Lack of care with personal hygiene.

Even if you've suspected for a while that you or someone you love might have dementia, the diagnosis may come as a shock.

People with dementia should try to remain as independent as possible and continue to enjoy their usual activities, but symptoms usually get worse over time. The progression depends on the personality and general health of the person with dementia, and on the type of dementia.

The important thing to remember is that help is out there. If you suffer from this illness or know someone who does and you need more advice, speak to your Housing Officer or Care Worker who may be able to point you in the right direction.

A few easy steps for going green!



(Information taken from <http://www.thedailygreen.com>) Some of the wording has been modified for this newsletter. Visit this site for more useful energy saving advice.

1. Bag It



Today: When you go out shopping, bring your own reusable bags. This preserves resources by cutting down on the huge number of paper and plastic bags that are discarded after a single trip.

Tomorrow: Combine your routine shopping trips with other errands, which will save you time and fuel.

2. Save on Electricity



There are many ways to trim those electric bills. Wash your laundry in cold water instead of hot, line dry your linens, and use a toaster oven for small heating needs instead of a bigger electric stove. Open curtains to let light in, turn off unneeded lights and appliances, and unplug unused electronics to counter the 'energy vampire' effect.

3. Shop locally



Today: Shop at your local farmers' market. This will help support farmers in your area, so they won't be forced to sell off their land for development, and it will decrease your food miles, meaning less fuel will be used to provide your daily meals. Your food will be delicious and better for you.

Tomorrow: Eat as much local and seasonal food as you reasonably can. Your meals will be fresher, and



will require much less fuel to transport, store and refrigerate.

4. Water Smarts



Today: Drink water from the tap, instead of buying single-use bottled water, which requires much more energy to produce, store and transport. Barely 20% of those plastic bottles end up getting recycled, and most are made out of petroleum. Use filters if you are concerned about your local water supply.

MDF

Manic Depression Fellowship
User-led charity for Bi-Polar and Depression sufferers

Address:
Castle Works
21 St. George's Road
London SE1 6ES

Telephone 08456 340 540
Email mdf@mdf.org.uk

4 Children

National charity dedicated to creating opportunities and building futures for all children.

Address:
E2 Block
County Hall
Market Road
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1LX

Telephone: 01245 438 572
Email:
Info@4Children-essex.org.uk
www.4childrenlocalprojects.org.uk

Open Road

Reducing the harmful impact of drugs and alcohol on users, their families, partners and society.

Address:
Open Road Brentwood
The Hollies
Highwood Hospital
Ongar Road
Brentwood
Essex CM15 9DY

Telephone: 0844 499 1323

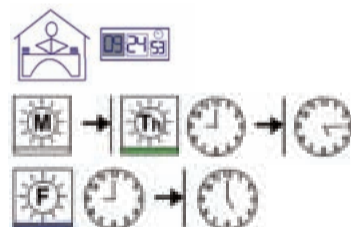
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Our Pilgrim offices are open from 9am to 5.15pm, Monday to Thursday and 9am to 5pm on Fridays.

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Mobile: 07921050065

Floating Support Colchester Office

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90-92 Butt Road, Colchester
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Fax: 01206 572306

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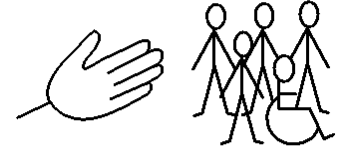
Email

involvement@swan.org.uk



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If you would like a copy of this newsletter in large print, Braille, CD or in your language please contact us on 0300 303 2500



English

If you would like to receive this in your own language, please contact us on 0300 303 2500

French

Pour les recevoir dans votre propre langue, veuillez nous contacter au 0300 303 2500

Polish

Aby otrzymać je we własnym języku, zgłoś się do nas pod numer 0300 303 2500

Somali

Haddii aad jeceshahay inaad kani ku hesho luqaddaada, fadlan nagala soo xiriir 0300 303 2500

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ 0300 303 2500 ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ

Bengali

আপনি এটা আপনার ভাষায় জানতে চাইলে আমাদের 0300 303 2500-এ যোগাযোগ করুন

Arabic

إذا كنت تريد الحصول على هذه المعلومات في لغتك، يرجى الاتصال بنا على الرقم 0300 303 2500

Urdu

اگر آپ اسے اپنی زبان میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو، براہ کرم ہم سے 0300 303 2500 پر رابطہ کریں

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