Jack lends a hand in the fight against infection

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The League of Friends has brought some extra cheer to North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust’s inpatient children’s ward. They provided a selection of presents and games for the ward to keep children occupied and entertained during their stay.

Ward manager Lesley Pearson, who accepted the gifts on behalf of the ward, said: “We’re very grateful to the League of Friends. Their donation was very generous and will make a real difference to children on the ward.”

Comfortable
The charity, which is as old as the NHS itself, is based in the outpatient department at the University Hospital of North Tees. All proceeds from the coffee bar go towards extras to make patients more comfortable.

Assistant director specialist services at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust Nick McDonough said: “We’re looking forward to being able to provide a new permanent home for the service in Stockton.

Head of therapy services at the trust Julie Parkes added: “Now we have community and hospital physiotherapy services together in one organisation we can be much more flexible when the need arises such as in the case because the leisure centre we were working in is closing down.”

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Assistant director of nursing Cath Siddle said: “Over the years the League of Friends volunteers have raised thousands of pounds to support the work of the hospital. They have complemented the work of the staff and have made a significant contribution to patient care. We thank them for this latest donation and all their dedication and commitment over the years which have helped improve hospital life.”

Tilery physiotherapy service moves temporarily

The closure of Stockton sports centre (commonly known as Tilery) has meant a temporary move of the community physiotherapy services currently provided there. Physiotherapy patients are now having their treatment in the main physiotherapy department at the University Hospital of North Tees. There are also additional sessions laid on at Thornaby health centre and patients can choose to have their treatment at either the University Hospital of North Tees or Thornaby health centre.

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A sophisticated technology system is making a radical difference to training in the University Hospital of North Tees’ endoscopy unit. The system – 2020 Vision - has been installed in the unit and is the first of its kind for the hospital. The camera system will provide a unique training aid allowing students to watch live endoscopy procedures from a separate training room.

The system has been installed in all four rooms in the endoscopy unit, with four cameras making up the sophisticated interactive CCTV, supported by modern microphone and digital recording equipment. Managing director of 2020 Vision Peter Houlis said: “We’ve worked with hospitals for many years now and pride ourselves on our ability to deliver to the needs of our clients.”

The system will enable remote live viewing and analysis, recording and detailed review and reproduction of training sessions onto CD.

Less intrusive
Consultant physician Matt Rutter, who is the lead clinician for endoscopy at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, said: “Training tomorrow’s doctors and endoscopy specialists is a vital part of what we do here in the trust. The live link is far less intrusive than having students in the room and it is quickly becoming an important tool in our training toolkit.

“2020 Vision has provided us with a superb state of the art endoscopy training facility. We asked for a flexible, simple to use, high tech solution and they delivered. I’m absolutely delighted.”

Anthem is your magazine and is only as good as you make it. If you have any ideas to improve it or you have a story please contact Claire Young on 01642 624339 or email: claire.young@nth.nhs.uk

Something to share?

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2020 Vision system helps to train future doctors

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Deputy director of nursing and patient safety for the North East Strategic Health Authority hailed North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust as one of its top performers in a recent visit.

Steve Page accepted an invitation from director of nursing and patient safety Sue Smith to find out more about the trust’s commitment to continually improving patient safety.

He met staff in accident and emergency, the emergency assessment unit, children’s services and critical care at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Steve said: “I enjoyed the opportunity to meet staff and I was very impressed on the focus that staff at all levels had on patient safety.”

Sue said: “It’s one thing for me to talk to Steve and his colleagues at the strategic health authority but it’s quite another for people like Steve to see these things in practice.

“We have a range of programmes in place to improve quality and safety. It was great for Steve to see that staff understand how all of this work fits together and it is the foundation for the way we all work.

“To know we’re one of the areas top performers is good. However we are committed to being the best and we won’t rest until we achieve that. It’s what we want, but more importantly it’s what our patients deserve.”

Training organiser, consultant in accident and emergency Suresh Wadwani, said: “It’s very important to get staff of every level to understand what is involved when dealing with an emergency situation where there are many casualties.

“I’m sure everyone who took part in the training has learned a great deal and found the knowledge they have gained to be invaluable.”

The MIMMS training is just part of the trust’s emergency planning – or resilience – arrangements. As well as major traffic or chemical incidents the trust must be prepared for pandemic flu, fire, flood or loss of power in its own buildings. North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust is a member of the local resilience forum; a cross county group which ensures public services are working together to provide a prompt, safe and effective response to any incident.

From boardroom to classroom

Board of directors’ meeting dates for 2009

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has announced its board of director meeting dates for the remainder of 2009. All meetings are on Thursdays and start at 1.30pm.

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<tr>
<td>26 March</td>
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<td>30 April</td>
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<td>28 May</td>
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Members of the public and staff are welcome to observe the meetings. Anyone planning to attend should contact membership@nth.nhs.uk or phone 01642 624060.

Board papers will be posted in the public zone at www.nth.nhs.uk as soon as the meeting is finished.
Everyone has heard of a heart attack and most people understand what it means – a loss of blood supply to the arteries of the heart causing a crushing feeling and severe pain. However fewer people know that a stroke is a sort of brain attack. In a stroke the blood supply to the brain is lost because of a blockage. Unlike a heart attack which can be treated with clot busting drugs or even a device inserted to unblock the offending artery, the outcome for people who have had a stroke can be devastating in other ways. People can lose not only movement but the ability to speak and swallow.

In stroke awareness month North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust is working to get staff, patients and the public to understand what stroke is and, most importantly, know how to recognise it quickly.

Strokes usually affect one side of the body, causing a loss of movement, it can also result in the person either not being able to speak or sound like the wiring in their brain has become mixed up because what speech they have is very confused. There could be what looks like paralysis in the face.

The trust is supporting the Stroke Association’s FAST campaign which aims to teach people how to identify a stroke and seek help quickly.

The important thing is to not only think FAST but act FAST.

What is FAST?
FAST requires an assessment of three specific symptoms of stroke:
• Facial weakness - can the person smile? Has their mouth or eye drooped?
• Arm weakness - can the person raise both arms?
• Speech problems - can the person speak clearly and understand what you say?
• Time to call 999.
If the person has failed any one of these tests, you must call 999. Stroke is a medical emergency and by calling 999 you can help someone reach hospital quickly and receive the early treatment they need.

The message is this – if you do the test and it looks like a stroke pick up the phone immediately and call 999.
Consultant physician Helen Skinner says the trust has made a massive investment in stroke which has moved the service forward significantly.

She said: “Before a stroke many people have what’s known as a TIA; a transient ischaemic attack. It’s like having angina but in the brain. TIsAs can last from a few minutes to an hour but they put people at a 40 per cent greater risk of having a stroke.

“We see people who’ve had a TIA quickly. We run a daily clinic so GPs can refer straight in. At that stage we’re looking for causes and trying to prevent the TIA turning into a full blown stroke.
Thrombolysis

“Many people have heard of thrombolysis; the clot busting drugs which were often used in people who were suspected of having a heart attack.

“We’ve recently introduced a day-time thrombolysis service and we’re looking to make this 24/7 because strokes can happen at any time and the treatment needs to be given within three hours of the stroke happening to be effective.

Results are good

“We’ve carried out a thrombolysis a number of times in each of our stroke units and the results are good. It’s definitely making a difference in the outcome for the patient so we want to do everything we can to teach people to recognise the signs of a stroke and act as quickly as possible.

“We see a range of effects in stroke. A person identified as having a stroke can be treated within three hours and be up and about and on their way back home the next day. With good rehabilitation they’ll make a full recovery.

“At the other extreme we see people who’ve lost the ability to speak and swallow and have lost the movement in one side of their body. Recovery is possible but it’s a very long haul. These patients receive daily therapy on the stroke unit from the team of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, specialised therapy assistants, dietitians and a health psychologist. The team works with the patients and their carers to achieve their goals and coordinate their discharge. Patients then continue their rehabilitation with the community stroke team.

“Tragically people still die of a stroke so acting FAST can really save lives.”

The stroke service was successful in its bids to the North of England cardiovascular network for two posts which, they believe, make a substantial difference in the service they can provide.

Smooth journey

The stroke co-ordinator will be dedicated to looking after the patient from admission to discharge working with colleagues in primary care, the local authority and charitable organisations to make the patient journey as smooth as possible while offering their family or carer the support they need.

A speech and language therapy team will be based on the stroke unit to provide assessment and therapy for people with communication or swallowing difficulties following their stroke. This service will be provided to people on the unit and elsewhere in the hospital.

As well as the cardiovascular network funding North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has put a significant amount of investment into improving the service. A significant part comes in the shape of health psychologist Roz Pollard. She works with the hospital and community teams to make sure the psychological aspects of treatment and recovery are addressed. For example, 40 per cent of people who have had a stroke may have low mood, and many patients and their carers can suffer from feelings of anxiety. Roz works with the teams, and patients and their families directly where needed, to help them find ways of coping with the physical, emotional and cognitive effects of the stroke.

Telemedicine

The trust’s investment is also paying for telemedicine between the University Hospital of North Tees and the University Hospital of Hartlepool. Helen Skinner said: “We can’t always be in the other stroke unit but having medical colleagues at the end of a computer will mean we can examine patients remotely and not waste vital time travelling. It’s a very exciting development and undoubtedly means we can all provide better and faster care.”

More nurses, dieticians, CT scans and portering support also mean care for patients is much quicker and much improved.

Trust, local authority and the Stroke Association work together to help patients on the road to recovery

Care for the patient who has had a stroke doesn’t end when they leave hospital. Staff from the trust’s community stroke team continue the rehabilitation working towards the patient’s own goals. Family and carer support organiser Trevor Newlove from the Stroke Association visits the patients in hospital to assess what help they’ll need when they leave and making sure they and their family know how to get support.

Trevor works very closely with the stroke ward and the community stroke team in the University Hospital of North Tees. He said: “I’m there for all the non clinical support. I can help patients and their families with information about benefits and other sources of support. I can even get the forms and help them fill them in. Working together means we can put the patient and their family at the very centre and tailor our services to their needs.”

Positive attitude

Recovering from a stroke is like recovering from many things. Having a positive attitude helps but meeting people who know what you’re going through provides a life line for many people.

Step is the weekly drop in stroke centre at the Stockton Independent Living Centre just round the corner from the University Hospital of North Tees. This has been funded by Stockton Borough Council until the end of April 2009.

Physiotherapist Nicola Reynolds gives the group of around a dozen people some chair-based exercises. She said: “Sitting still isn’t good news for people who’ve had a stroke so it’s important to find ways you can be as active as possible. We encourage people to attend the local active health scheme and to return to social and leisure activities.”

Circulation

“Simple things like just stretching in your chair also help. A shuffle backwards and forwards
just helps reduce sore areas and keeps the blood circulating. Things like this really do make a difference to how a person recovers and it's far easier to learn the exercises and have a bit of fun at the same time in the group. It's great to have therapy assistant Liz Neal here too because she really helps to support people. She's another listening ear which is so important as we support people in their recovery."

Occupational therapist Viv Chadwick is employed by Stockton Council. Viv gives practical support and advice for coping at home when even making a cup of tea can pose a major challenge. “It’s all about putting the person back in charge,” she said.

“Strokes can happen to anyone but they’re a major challenge to people who’ve been used to being able to do whatever they want to do whenever they want to do it. At the drop in stroke centre we aim for everyone to have lots of communication opportunities. This includes informal conversation as well as some more structured activities. Many people lose their confidence after their stroke and find they are socialising much less. This is particularly the case for those with communication problems. Attending the centre gives the opportunity to develop this confidence again, practising communication skills in a safe environment.

Stepping stone
“We are keen for the drop in stroke centre to be a stepping stone for people to access the activities that are important to them, whenever this is possible. This may involve resuming previous interests or developing new ones. For some, it may be paid or voluntary work. This may be a long journey for some and quicker for others. We recognise that it takes a lot of courage to attend an exercise class or social group for the first time. Specialist therapy assistant Liz Neal can support people by attending with them until they are sufficiently confident to be independent.

“W’re delighted to have the funding and we’ve got long term hopes for the service because we can see it’s making a difference. “The funding can also pay for taxis to bring patients to the rehab group. Transport is a major issue and without it many people would be isolated and without the support they need to help their recovery.”

There’s no better way of finding out what the services mean to people than asking the users themselves.

Strokes can happen to anyone but they’re a major challenge to people who’ve been used to being able to do whatever they want to do whenever they want to do it

Communication difficulties
Speech and language therapist Christine Lucas works for North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust.

Christine said: “After a stroke, some people find they have communication difficulties. For some, this may involve word finding difficulties, where they are unable to find the word they want to say, or find the wrong word. For others, it may be difficult to say anything at all. Some people have problems understanding what is said to them or struggle with reading or writing.

Clues
“Families, carers and friends can all help recovery by thinking of clues. It takes the pressure off the person who’s had a stroke because they can respond to the clues.

Lifeline
One lady who asked not be named described it as a lifeline. She has had a stroke before but, unaware that support was available, made all her own arrangements for adaptations. This time she says she feels like she’s not alone.

Tony, 59, was visiting the group for the last time. He is planning to marry his long time partner and move back to South Africa. He said: “I am still recovering but I can’t thank people enough.”

It was a first visit for Marjorie, 77, from Billingham. She said: “It’s just good to know there are people there to help you.”

Seventy-eight-year-old Bill had a stroke in August. He is full of praise for staff on ward 40 at the University Hospital of North Tees who he said were angels who couldn’t do enough for him.

Supported at the group by friend and neighbour Pauline, Bill makes the journey to the weekly rehab group to speak to and support other people who’ve had a stroke.

Bill said: “There’s so much to find out when something like this happens and it can be difficult to know where to look for help. Trevor from the Stroke Association told my neighbour Pauline about Dial-a-Ride so now I can get out and about. Everyone is fantastic. This centre gives you hope.”
Roger Kirby died on the 26 November peacefully at his home. He had worked at Hartlepool and latterly in North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust for over 30 years.

As a surgeon he was impeccable showing outstanding judgement and excellent technical skills. During a 20 year period the unit carried out 110 successful procedures for advanced colorectal cancer with a zero mortality rate and such was the interest in this that the unit were invited to present the results to the Royal College of Surgeons in 1991. This procedure is now only done in specialised units.

In 1991 we carried out the first laparoscopic cholecystectomy in Hartlepool and many other procedures since.

He was universally respected by colleagues and nursing staff alike and was extremely popular with his patients. His clinics were always over-subscribed but he always had time to see extra patients. On one occasion he wrote to his colleagues and his secretary inadvertently wrote his name as Rocker Kirby. Roger duly signed the letter and sent it out to his colleagues. He was most amused to receive the reply saying Dear Rocker.

He was an outgoing man with a love of the open spaces and countryside. He was an avid hill walker particularly loving the Lake District. He would take every opportunity to get away and enjoy the countryside. He was a competent sportsman playing golf and tennis as a younger man and in his youth he rode a 500 cc motorbike.

Retired GP Dr Relton said that from a GP’s point of view Roger was extremely helpful and always accessible. He carried out his duties and helped them with an absolute minimum of fuss and was universally respected by them all.

He leaves his wife Marie, sons Richard and Ian and daughter Joanna as well as two grandchildren.

A tribute to a respected colleague

Consultant surgeon Greg McLatchie pays tribute to his colleague Roger Kirby

An unusual way to say thanks for his care

When former patient Gordon McNeil heard that staff nurse Shona Findlay and sister Jane Etherson were leaving he wanted to give them a very special keepsake.

Gordon, who was a patient on the ward in December 2007 and continued to have treatment throughout the year, has had names of the nurses and domestic staff tattooed on his back as a permanent reminder of the care he received on the ward.

Shona, seen here with the framed photo of the tattoo she was given by Mr McNeil, left Ward 28 in January to join Edinburgh Royal Infirmary as a staff nurse in radiology and sister Jane Etherson left shortly afterwards.

Matron for surgery Debbie Blackwood said: “This is a very unusual way to show thanks for the care received. Gordon will have a permanent reminder and Shona and Jane will have to decide where to put the framed photo of Mr McNeil’s human work of art!”

Roger Kirby

Shona Findlay, Kimberley O’Brien and Tara Davison with a photo of the thank you tattoo
Chief executive continues his community tour
Since becoming responsible for the directorate of community services last November chief executive Alan Foster and his directors have been on a programme of visits to meet community colleagues and get to know more about the work they do.

Specialist services manager Nicola D’Northwood introduced Alan to a number of staff at Stockton's Lawson Street. His first stop was to the front door of the clinic where he met administrative and clerical staff. Here he learned about the vital role of the admin and clerical team in greeting patients and the public and ensuring the clinic runs smoothly.

He then met the diabetes team who explained about their one stop shop for retinal screening, foot checks and blood testing. After that it was on to the district nursing team who were in the middle of a handover when he arrived. He had the chance to talk about how the new working arrangements would improve care for patients because staff were now in one organisation.

Upstairs he met the podiatry team who described their service which addresses not only foot but also postural and walking problems. The team talked about their close working with physiotherapists and the help, treatment and support they can offer which can prevent a hospital referral.

Nicola D’Northwood said: “Staff have welcomed the opportunity to meet Alan and tell him about their work. It was good for them to put a face to the name and have the chance for a chat.”

As part of his marathon tour Alan also visited Caroline Street Health Centre, Greenbank and the Phoenix Centre in Hartlepool guided by locality manager Sue Judge. At Caroline Street he met the Optin team who explained about home visits and the out of hours service, then it was on to Greenbank and the Phoenix Centre to meet some district nurses and discuss the impending move to new premises in Masefield Road.

Alan also met with the speech and language therapy teams where he was introduced by speech and language therapy manager for the Stockton area Jenny Wright and head of Hartlepool speech and language therapy Nikki Wray.

Meanwhile, director of strategic development and deputy chief executive Carole Langrick has also been out on the road visiting Hartfields retirement and extra care village where she was shown around the impressive facilities by locality manager Shirley Anderson and Tees Street in Hartlepool where she met the multilink and podiatry teams.

Carole said: “I was extremely impressed by the facilities at Hartfields, it offers accommodation in pleasant surroundings for retired people where they can live their own life and be as independent as they want, but know that care is right there when they need it.”

Alan Foster added: “In the hospitals I like to go to wards and departments and see as many people as I can face to face. I think it’s important to make time to see people who are all working together to provide excellent care, understand what their pressures are and show my support. I know it’s more difficult to get to speak to people working in the community because many of them are out and about but I’m making every effort to see as many people as possible. “I’ve been impressed with what I’ve seen so far. Quite rightly staff are proud of the services they provide and they’ve got lots of ideas about how to improve things even further. I’m looking forward to more visits in the weeks and months to come.”
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has announced the results of its governor elections since becoming an NHS foundation trust a year ago. Twenty one public governors were originally elected in November 2007 to represent the views of people in their areas in addition to six staff governors to represent the views of the trust’s staff. They were elected for one, two or three years depending on the number of votes cast. This election was to fill the seats which became vacant after the first year and for any resignations during that time. Those elected to the seats vacated after the first year will have a three year term of office. Those elected to seats where governors had resigned will complete the original term of office of the resigning governor.

The new governors are:

**Stockton**
Carol Hannant, Patricia Margaret Upton, David Philip Godfrey, Richard Thomas Sidney and Stanley Slater.

**Hartlepool**
Maureen June Rogers and Ron Watts

**Easington**
John Cairns, Maureen Lenehan and Arthur Appleby

**Staff**
Ian Fraser and Dr Siva Kumar

The walls of wards, departments and clinics right across North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust are full of thank you cards from patients and families who want to thank staff for their own or a relative’s care.

Wingate patient Patricia Fuidge took the time to write to the clinical director of surgery Pud Bhaskar to pay tribute to the care she received from the urology team and consultant surgeon Ignacio Carretero-Zamora. Mrs Fuidge wrote:

“I wanted you to know how grateful I was to everyone who cared for me before, during and after my operation.

“I was a little worried but Mr Zamora especially really put me at ease. The operation to remove my kidney was successful and I am now feeling very well.

“I also wish to say a huge thank you to all your wonderful nursing staff, so caring, hard working and dedicated to their profession.

“I had a very happy stay in your hospital thanks to Mr Zamora and the nurses. A very big thank you to everybody.”

Pud Bhaskar said: “It was really good of Mrs Fuidge to take the time to write to me. I was delighted to pass on her kind words and gratitude to Ignacio and the team.”

Chief executive Alan Foster added: “I’d also like to thank the urology team. It’s a testament to them all that Mrs Fuidge’s experience in hospital was a happy one.”

**Thanks from a grateful patient**
Jack lends a hand in the fight against infection

When young Jack Penfold was asked if he’d like to have his photo taken it was for a photo with a difference. Eight year old Jack, from Collingwood Road in Hartlepool, has had his image recreated as a life size cut out. The aim behind it is to help get the hand hygiene message across to children and their families who come into hospital.

Assistant matron for infection prevention and control Lynn Blackwood said: “We know that infections spread very quickly between children and we needed a way of reminding them which would be hard for them to miss. What better than to have a child-sized cut out beside the touch free wash basin as a reminder?

“We were delighted when Jack agreed to have his photo taken. We’re really pleased with the finished product and we’re sure it will make a difference when children see something that’s the same size as they are when they come into the ward or department.”

Director of nursing and patient safety Sue Smith said: “The vast majority of messages about hand hygiene in hospitals are aimed at adults but we know infections spread quickly among children.

“They tend to have a lot of contact with each other playing games and even when they are talking they are more likely to be close to or touching each other.

“I’m very grateful to Jack for agreeing to be our model. I think the cut out is fantastic and I’m sure the whole idea will appeal to children. This is part of our continuous work to keep hand hygiene at the top of everyone’s agenda.

“We know having clean hands is the best way to stop infections spreading so it’s something we constantly have to encourage among visitors, patients and staff.”

Jack was very pleased with the results too, he said: “It’s weird seeing myself on a photo like this, but it is very important for children to wash their hands to keep germs away.”
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has successfully been ranked as 31st in the Top 100 healthcare organisations to work for in the UK. The national Healthcare 100 awards celebrate the top employers in healthcare and are jointly run by the Health Service Journal and the Nursing Times, supported by NHS Employers. The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in March.

**Latest national patient survey highlights good performance**

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has received the results of feedback from patients attending its accident and emergency departments as part of a national survey. The results of the national emergency department survey 2008 will help the trust to further improve care for patients who come into accident and emergency at its two hospitals – the University Hospital of Hartlepool and the University Hospital of North Tees. The survey is part of the NHS national patient survey programme led by the Healthcare Commission and all hospital trusts with an emergency department in England took part.

A random sample of 850 patients (aged 16 and over) from the local area who were seen at the trust’s two accident and emergency departments earlier this year were sent a patient survey. The survey asked them how they felt about arriving at the department, their wait to be seen, communication by the department’s staff, tests they may have had, pain management, the hospital environment, discharge from the department and their overall satisfaction with the care they received.

The results of the survey were published last week with national benchmarking to describe each trust’s position nationally across the NHS. Particularly high performing areas include being seen quickly by staff and not staying long in the department, being given enough privacy when being examined and treated, and if needing attention being helped promptly by staff. The trust was the highest performing trust nationally in these areas.

**Trust provides teachers with insight into health careers**

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust’s education and training department has been giving a group of teachers an insight into careers in health.

Deputy head of training Alan Sheppard (pictured here with the teachers) said: “I was approached by Tees Valley Education Business Partnership to develop a day for teachers involved in delivering the diploma in society, health and development. The diploma gives students an insight into careers within the sector.

The teachers were from secondary schools in Hartlepool, Redcar, Darlington, and colleges of further education in Middlesbrough and Hartlepool.

“The aim of the day was to give teachers from across the region more information about professions in hospitals and we had speakers from pharmacy, nursing, biomedical sciences, allied health professionals, medicine, midwifery and infection control and a tour of pathology lab, physiotherapy and pharmacy. “People know there are careers for doctors and nurses but they’re usually unaware of the range of opportunities in all sorts of professions.”

Following very positive feedback the trust has been asked to provide a couple of these events a year.

**Roy calls it a day**

Car park officer Roy Dixon has retired after 14 years’ service with the trust. A keen walker Roy is looking forward to having more time to walk in his beloved hills.
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has been mentioned in a report by the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement on heart failure. Heart failure is a condition where the heart cannot pump enough blood round the body. It can cause fluid to build up in the legs, arms, digestive tract and internal organs.

The Trust was praised for its:

- leadership, especially the leadership of the general manager Sue Piggott (pictured) who understands the processes of care which means her work with both staff and the commissioners of the service are credible and effective.
- having a clinical effectiveness advisor working with the heart failure team who continually looks at the best evidence to help the team stay at the forefront of heart failure care
- intermediate care services for safe and quick discharge so patients can be supported at home. This arrangements has resulted in 48 admissions being avoided and fewer transfers taking place in the first three months of the service

Chief executive Alan Foster said: “When the board of directors heard about this they were full of praise for everyone involved. To be mentioned in a national report just goes to show that the trust is at the leading edge of this type of care.

“This wouldn’t be the case if it weren’t for the leadership, enthusiasm and dedication of people like Sue Piggott and the team in medicine, clinical effectiveness and the other services which support this work.”

A signing ceremony to mark the launch of the NHS Constitution has taken place at Downing Street. The constitution, the first of its kind in the world, was signed by Prime Minister Gordon Brown, health secretary Alan Johnson and NHS chief executive David Nicholson. The constitution will bring together in one place the rights and responsibilities of staff and patients, to ensure the NHS operates fairly and effectively and is the result of extensive consultation with thousands of NHS staff, patients and the public. This includes an event which was held at Gosforth Racecourse in Newcastle which was attended by over 110 people keen to make their views count.

The constitution also recognises that the NHS is too important to be left to chance. The government will be obliged by law to renew the NHS constitution every 10 years so that any changes are the result of a full and transparent debate. There will be a new legal duty on all NHS organisations to take account of the constitution in decisions that are made about local healthcare and treatment.

Chief executive Alan Foster said: “The founding principles of the NHS have endured for 60 years and remain very important for staff, patients and the public.

“The NHS Constitution sets out in one place the rights and responsibilities of staff and members of the public.

“The NHS belongs to everyone and it is only right that patients who use its services and people who work for it know what is expected of them.”

In response to the consultation the final constitution includes:

- A right for you to make choices about your care and to information to help exercise that choice
- A new legal right to receive the vaccinations that the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation recommends you should receive under an NHS-provided national immunisation programme
- A right making explicit your entitlement to drugs and treatments that have been recommended by NICE for use in the NHS, if your doctor says they are clinically appropriate for you.
- A right to expect local decisions on funding of other drugs and treatments to be made rationally following a proper consideration of the evidence
- Clear and comprehensive rights to complaint and redress.

For NHS staff, the draft constitution recognises that it is their commitment, professionalism and dedication that really make a difference to quality of care and patients’ experiences. It outlines a series of pledges which the NHS will strive to deliver to ensure that staff are provided with the training and support they need to do a rewarding and effective job.

Therapy and wheelchair services manager Julie Parkes, along with a group of 24 other allied health professionals, was invited to Buckingham Palace for the NHS 60th anniversary celebrations.

The group joined around 200 other clinicians for the two-hour event. Everyone was personally introduced to the Queen, who then took the time to chat with small groups. Julie said: “It was fantastic to meet and talk to the Queen. We were honoured to see allied health professionals’ contributions recognised in such a high-profile way.

“Everyone really appreciated the effort made by the Palace to stage a health-themed exhibition of artefacts, including Leonardo Da Vinci’s model of the eye and Florence Nightingale’s diaries.”
A grand night out to say thank you to staff

When North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust wanted to thank staff who’d gone above and beyond the call of duty they thought what better way to do than treat them to a grand night out.

Six staff joined acting chairman Paul Garvin, deputy chief executive Carole Langrick and governors Ken McCreesh and Arthur Appleby at the Mayor of Stockton’s charity ball in the Wynyard Rooms.

They were:
- Tim Carter from facilities who was nominated for his contribution to the A&E department during a very busy period.
- Haematology ward matron Sheila Mounter who went to a great deal of effort to arrange for a patient’s family member from Bangladesh to come to the UK for a bone marrow donation.
- Domestic supervisor Liz Walker who found a person lying in the street and acted quickly to summon help.
- Ward manager Cath Taylor who was nominated for her devotion to duty on the ward.
- Day case unit sister Sue Stevens who was nominated for the way she has taken on extra work to help the unit.
- Clinical director for dental services Judi Breckon who was nominated for her commitment to improving children’s dental health.

Paul Garvin said: “It was excellent to be able to say thank you to staff in this way. It was also good for Ken and Arthur our governors to have the opportunity to chat to staff and get to know them.”

Carole Langrick added: “It’s important that we say a very public thank you to staff who go that extra mile. This year we supported the Mayor’s charity event at the same time and, of course, it gave us all an excuse to get our glad rags on!”

Do you know anyone who’s gone that extra mile? If you’d like to nominate someone for a thank you award please email communications@nth.nhs.uk

Chief executive of Infertility Network UK declares assisted reproduction unit officially open

Clare Lewis-Jones, chief executive of Infertility Network UK, has officially opened a brand new state of the art assisted reproduction unit at the University Hospital of Hartlepool.

She said how delighted she was to be in Hartlepool to see the investment being made in top class fertility services.

Principal embryologist and business manager for fertility services Dave Gibbon said: “We were really pleased to have Clare with us. As chief executive of the country’s top infertility support network she knows what’s on offer around the country. It was good be able to show her that the facilities here at Hartlepool match those of many of the top units in the country.

“Fertility is one subject where people’s emotions run very high so everything in the unit has been designed to help alleviate some of the pain, maintain dignity and at the same time give couples the very best chance of having a child.

“We’re very privileged to have this unit at Hartlepool but it is no more than the patients in this area deserve.”

The new unit has been designed with the following features:
- ultra modern examination rooms
- top level facilities for disabled people
- secure entrance and exit to the department
- frosted windows to preserve privacy
- top grade air filtered treatment rooms
- soundproofing

Chief executive of North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust Alan Foster said: “I am proud to say the facilities we have here at Hartlepool are second to none, but it is not just buildings that make a successful unit it is the staff who work there, and the team we have here is excellent.”

The new unit plans to build on the excellent reputation that the fertility team already has. Dave Gibbon added: “Fertility techniques are advancing all the time, as are the requirements of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority. To provide the best service we must ensure we are at the forefront of science and clinical medicine.”

Clare Lewis-Jones, Dave Gibbon and Iona MacLeod at the opening of the assisted reproduction unit
When the midwives at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust's new birthing centre in the University Hospital of Hartlepool were looking for some beautiful art to adorn their walls they needed to look no further than Cleveland College of Art and Design. The centre wanted some stunning pieces of art and the foundation degree in applied arts - which includes ceramics, jewellery and textiles - were looking for a live design brief. And so the idea was born.

Manager of the birthing centre Judith Stout said: “We wanted some art on the theme of the family in its widest sense and we worked with the degree level students to give them a project they could really get their teeth into. “For infection control reasons and to protect the work we couldn’t have the textiles or ceramics themselves on display but the photography students photographed the work and we have had the work framed or stretched on canvas. “It was brilliant to see the way the students interpreted the brief and we have those alongside the work so that people can understand what’s behind the design. “We’re absolutely delighted with the results and we’re pleased to have work from people studying in Hartlepool on the walls of the birthing centre in the University Hospital of Hartlepool.

Jan Hinchliffe McCutcheon from Cleveland College of Art and Design added; “After months of work it’s excellent to see the finished designs in place. It was a great project and gave our students the experience of working to a live design brief which will stand them in good stead when they head out into the commercial world.”

Cleveland College of Art and Design applied arts students are now working with staff and patients to produce some art work for the assisted reproduction unit.
Secondary schools across the Stockton Borough Council area have been invited to take part in a project that highlights the effects of smoking and lung cancer awareness.

Macmillan lung cancer nurse specialist Jeanette Draffan from the University Hospital of North Tees has visited seven secondary schools since last month to talk to pupils about the effects smoking can have on people’s lungs. She said: “I think it’s really important we go into schools and teach children about the effects of smoking. The earlier someone starts smoking the more risk they are a developing cancer and other smoking related diseases in later life.”

“In the schools I have been to the pupils have said they found the talks worthwhile and informative.”

So far Jeanette has visited Thornaby Community School, Thornaby St Patricks RC, Egglescliffe School, Grangefield School, Blakeston School, Billingham Campus and Conyers School.

During lung cancer awareness month the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation worked with Macmillan Cancer Support for the seventh year running to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of lung cancer, and the importance of early diagnosis.

Every day 105 people are diagnosed with lung cancer and another 92 people die of the disease. Lung cancer has one of the lowest survival rates of any cancer. If people get to a doctor earlier they could have been operated on and for many, their lives could have been saved.

Jeanette added: “Lung cancer is the UK’s biggest cancer killer, but early diagnosis really does save lives. “It’s vital people take any symptoms seriously and get checked out without delay to ensure the very best chance of survival.”

Symptoms to look out for are:
- Loss of appetite - anorexia
- Unexplained weight loss
- Normal voice altered – hoarseness
- Green or blood stained sputum
- Cough that is persistent for more than three weeks
- Abnormal breathing – breathlessness
- Noisy breathing – ‘wheeze’ or ‘stridor’
- Continuous chest aches or pains
- Energy levels reduced
- Recurrent chest infections

People are encouraged to visit their GP if they have any of these symptoms, particularly if they smoke or used to smoke.

You can find out more by calling the Macmillan CancerLine on 0808 808 2020 or The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation helpline on 0800 358 7200.

A FREE bus service (H1) to help people living in Hartlepool to get to and from the University Hospital of North Tees has been extended again.

The service was launched just before Christmas 2007 after it was announced that maternity services were transferring to the University Hospital of North Tees while facilities at the University Hospital of Hartlepool were refurbished to create the midwife led birthing centre.

Hartlepool Council agreed to part-fund the service along with North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and Hartlepool Primary Care Trust amid concerns by councillors about the lack of adequate public transport services between the two hospitals.

The service has since been extended several times and now it has been extended again after the Council and the Trusts agreed to continue it until 31 March 2009. The council is paying 50 per cent of the cost, with the two trusts paying the remainder.

Cabinet member for neighbourhoods and communities Councillor Peter Jackson urged local people to continue to take advantage of the free bus service.

He said: “I am very pleased that, in spite of the increasing financial pressures which the council faces, we have been able to find the funding to help continue the service into next year.

“Although the current funding arrangement will cease on 31 March, the council will be exploring further opportunities to consider how the future of the service could be maintained.”

Director of operations Kevin Oxley said: “We’re delighted that the free bus has been extended until the end of March.

“We know that transport is a concern for people and we’re pleased to have had such a positive relationship with the Primary Care Trust and Hartlepool Council which is allowing the service to continue for a few more months.”

There are six buses each way, every day. They leave from Holdforth Road (outside Kensington Court) and pick up at the Central Library and Queens Meadow Business Park (A689) before arriving at North Tees 38 minutes later.

Copies of the full timetable can be obtained from the Civic Centre, all Hartlepool libraries, the University Hospital of Hartlepool and the University Hospital of North Tees. For more information, contact Hartlepool Council on 01429 523855.
Whoops child safety project brings home comforts to children’s ward

A generous donation from a local child safety project has made the stay of children admitted to the University of North Tees' children's ward just a bit more comfortable.

The Whoops child safety project is part of SureStart’s home safety scheme and aims to prevent and reduce accidents in and around the home.

The scheme decided it wanted to turn its attention to children in hospital and SureStart's Allison Blackburn and Emma Overton-Burt came into the ward to present some packs containing soap, a face cloth, a tooth brush and toothpaste.

Chantelle Crane and Lucy Jones, both 10, and seven-year-old Farah Awar were on the ward that day and were the first to be presented with the packs.

Play specialist Clare Wise was delighted to receive the packs on behalf of the children's ward.

She said: “When children are admitted to hospital in an emergency things like soap and toothpaste are the last things on anyone's mind.

“It's a great idea to have these packs and very thoughtful of the Whoops child safety project to provide them. We’ll certainly make good use of them.”

North East aims to be number one choice for trainee doctors

The NHS in the North East has launched a campaign to showcase what a great place the region is for doctors to live and train.

A national recruitment drive for trainee doctors, who work and train in local hospitals, is launched at this time each year. There is stiff competition to attract the best possible applicants and every region in the country wants to be the first choice for doctors.

This year the North East NHS has launched a Live and Train campaign, featuring a new website and promotional materials designed to show prospective trainee doctors exactly what the region has to offer.

In 2008, healthcare services in the north east were rated the best in the country for the second year running.

The quality of training offered by local NHS organisations is vital in ensuring the North East continues to deliver the best services to the highest possible standard.

Training is organised and delivered by the Northern Deanery, which offers doctors the highest quality of experience, supervision and support.

The campaign aims to demonstrate how much our region has to offer and the range of experiences we have right on our doorstep – from thriving cities, peaceful countryside, excellent leisure opportunities and scenic coastlines.

Postgraduate dean and director of the northern deanery Moira Livingston (above) said: “The North East has so much to offer trainees and this year we are sending that message out loud and clear.

“We are raising the bar in terms of regional promotion and showing on paper and online what we know but haven’t said enough – that the NHS in the North East is the best place for doctors to train and that the region is a fantastic place to live. We hope our campaign will attract lots of applications this year to help us continue to deliver the best healthcare services.”

Visit the new website at www.northerndeanearyrecruitment.nhs.uk
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has reaffirmed the commitment of the board of directors in the quest to be the best trust in the country for recycling. 108 new recycling bins have recently been installed in order to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. The new bins are for recycling newspapers/magazines, plastic bottles and cans. In 2008 we were ranked as one of the best trusts in the country for recycling as we already recycle 1.6 tonnes of cardboard and 1.1 tonnes of paper each week and up to 4,000 fluorescent tubes each year. In addition there is metal, electrical equipment, and hedge trimmings which are chipped on site and reused.

Waste manager John Bushnall said: “Everyone is encouraged to drink more water these days. We employ 5,500 staff, and if only a quarter of them have one bottle of water a day at work that adds up to over 400,000 bottles a year.” The new bins have been placed in prominent places in the University Hospital of Hartlepool and the University Hospital of North Tees. Staff, patients and visitors are being encouraged to use the new bins for bottles, cans and newspapers rather than dispose of them in domestic waste bins. The bins are emptied by porters and domestic staff and the contents removed from site by an external contractor which actually works out cheaper than sending it to landfill.

Director of operations Kevin Oxley said: “In these days of climate change it is important we all do our bit towards saving the environment. The trust board is firmly committed to this initiative and see it not only as a way of fulfilling our obligation but ensuring that the trust remains one of the best in the country for recycling, if not the best.

“We can only achieve this with the help of our staff and it is thanks to them that we have achieved the recognition we have had so far. I know we can rely on them for their continued commitment to this and future initiatives.”

The trust board is firmly committed to this and future initiatives. No one with any questions about the ICE system can contact kevin.downes@nth.nhs.uk or phone 01642 383448. Further communications, demonstrations and training on the ICE system will take place throughout spring and early summer to make the transition smooth.

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust is currently implementing an electronic requesting and results application for diagnostics. The new system called ICE enables the user to place an electronic request for pathology and radiology tests and investigations using a web browser.

Examinations are requested on screen and sent electronically to the radiology and pathology information systems where they are received in seconds.

ICE Desktop also allows the user to view individual patient reports sent electronically to the ICE database from both the pathology and radiology computer systems. This module is known as ICE Reporting. Results appear on the same screen which not only greatly improves the flow of clinical information but also speeds up the diagnostic process as all the data will be in the same place at the same time.

Pathology request labels are printed automatically and can be applied to sample bottles, which guarantees the name on the specimen is legible.

One of the main benefits to the system is that it records who has read a result. This is important as it provides accountability and ensures that no results slip through the net. The system is clever enough to send an email to a referral pathologist if has requested a diagnostic test but who has not read the result.

Project manager Mark MacDonald, who also managed the successful PACS implementation into the trust in 2006, said: “This is a major project and as such requires staff to embrace new technology to reap the benefits of more efficient test requesting. Having all the information in the right place at the right time will help reduce diagnostic waiting times which will help the trust achieve its 18 week referral targets.”

Pathology IT and information manager Kevin Downes said: “ICE provides a major improvement to pathology by ensuring essential questions are asked at the time of request to give complete clinical information, often not provided on hand written requests. This provides much better patient care by reducing unnecessary repeat requesting of tests at the bedside.”

Local GPs will also be able to access the system and see a history of their patients’ results as well as request these tests from their surgeries which will cut down on duplication of tests. Medical director Peter Gill has been given a demonstration of the system said: “I see this as a major step forward in integrating our IT services in the trust. As a radiologist I know that this will help us to provide a speedier and more efficient service to our users and, most importantly, to our patients.”

Clinical director of radiology Matthew Trewhella said: “ICE is essentially an interface into the radiology information system and will do away with paper allowing quicker, easier test requesting and safer and quicker access to reports. It will allow a complete audit trail from test request to report being acknowledged. The system is user friendly, though, of course some training is needed to use it. It is well established with a proven track record and is already used to send reports electronically to some GP practices. Once fully operational it should significantly speed the patient pathway.”

The plan is to pilot the new system in EAU on both sites from the middle of March with a progressive roll-out to other areas within the trust and local GP surgeries from April. Further communications, demonstrations and training on the ICE system will take place throughout spring and early summer to make the transition smooth.

Any one with any questions about the ICE system can contact kevin.downes@nth.nhs.uk or phone 01429 522411 or mark.macdonald@nth.nhs.uk or phone 01642 383448.
North Tees and Hartlepool gets behind Change 4 Life

You can’t have failed to notice the invasion of small brightly-coloured figures urging you to get off the bus a stop earlier, take the stairs instead of the lift or eat vegetables instead of chips. However, there is no cause for alarm as they are only part of the Change 4 Life campaign which is trying to improve the health of our children. Change 4 Life is a cross government campaign supported by the Department of Health which was launched on television, in newspapers, on billboards and online at the start of the year. The aim is to improve children’s diets and levels of activity, so reducing the threat to their future health and happiness. And health organisations have a crucial role to play, according to Public Health North East.

Children and obesity manager Roselle Oberholzer said: “We want people in the region to be getting the Change 4 Life message wherever they go. The link between obesity and preventable illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer, is undeniable - but research shows that many parents are unaware of the risks to their children. They also underestimate the amount they and their children eat and overestimate the amount of activity the family does. Research also shows that most people will only change their behaviour if they believe that everyone around them is changing too.

If families are to eat more healthily and increase their levels of physical activity they will need the support of those they trust - their doctors, their schools, the supermarkets where they buy their food, the institutions and brands that they trust.

The trust has been doing its bit by putting up posters encouraging people to eat healthily and use the stairs and promoting the campaign to staff, patients and the public, including a link on its website.

Chief executive Alan Foster said: “Eating healthily and getting plenty of exercise is vitally important for everyone, and I am 100 per cent behind this campaign. Using the lift burns up the same amount of electricity as boiling a kettle, so by using the stairs you are not only helping to keep yourself healthier, but also helping the environment.” For more information on the campaign, visit the Change 4 Life website www.nhs.uk/change4life or the phone the helpline on 0300 123 4567.

The Ellen Kent Amphitheatre production of Tosca at Sunderland Empire was a family affair for the Rodgers family.

Ten year old Emily who is part of Stagecoach performing arts training school in Hartlepool had been asked to sing and dance in the performance. Due to a lack of male extras Emily roped in her dad, medical illustration manager Paul, and granddad Alan to join her on the stage.

The performance went very well in front of a 2,000 strong audience, so well in fact that Paul and Alan were invited back the following evening as extras for La Boheme where they played the parts of upper class Frenchmen in a café scene. The night after that saw them once again treading the boards as a matador and a restaurant waiter.

Paul said: “I thought I had got away with it, but I was met by some members of trust staff outside the theatre who had recognised me. “I have to admit that I have been bitten by the acting bug. Dad and I have agreed to return to the stage again along with Emily to feature in the operas Turandot and Aida.

February/March 09
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10.00am 1 Hour Relaxing Spa Session plus Full Body Massage
12.00pm Lunch in Restaurant
1.30pm Intensive Conditioning Treatment with Finish

Spa Pamper Day
Date: Wednesday 11th March 2008
Price: £25.00
Time: Start 10.00am finish approximately 3.00pm
10.00am 1 Hour Relaxing Spa Session plus Full Body Massage
12.00pm Lunch in Restaurant
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A number of featured themed events, special occasions and fund raising opportunities will take place throughout the year. A typical 3 course lunch costs £7.00 per person and evening meal is £10.50 per person including coffee.

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Tuesday 12th May - Flavours of the East Evening

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A large open plan lounge/dining area with a self service coffee shop will be accessible to all residents and their families.

Residential Care for Adults with disabilities
This 12 ground floor bedroom unit with en-suite showers has specifically been developed with the individual as a focus. The unit has been designed with a skills kitchen, skill and therapy area to assist with rehabilitation.

Independent living apartments
There are 10 two bedroom living apartments and 6 one bedroom living apartments available for purchase or rent with the older person in mind.

For more information and to request a brochure please contact Abbeyvale Care Centre manager Andrew Pattison at:
Abbeyvale Care Centre, Laidler Close, Blackhall, Hartlepool, TS27 4QG
Tel: 0191 586 93 58