Christine looks forward to a healthy new year

Christine Kemp is looking forward to a healthier and happier new year, after losing nearly three stone and getting a taste for healthier foods.

It’s thanks to senior health trainer Elaine Russon who has offered her one-one support, getting her on the right track to leading a much healthier lifestyle.

Christine, 50, from Thornaby first heard about the health trainer service through her GP. She joined a group weight management session at first, but realised it was a one-to-one session that really worked for her.

She said: “I was 16 stone 4lb when I first started seeing Elaine. I’d already lost some weight previously, but I needed that extra help to carry on. Five months later I was a much healthier 13 stone 9lbs.

“I do feel proud of myself. I used to be a size 22 and now I’m a size 16. I’ve still not yet reached my target weight – but I’m well on the way. Booking a holiday was a fantastic motivation for me.

“Weight loss has to be gradual. I love going out on my bike. Although I’d cycle before I lost the weight, it was a struggle. It has gradually become easier as my fitness levels have really improved.

“I still love to bake. And, that’s something I enjoy doing – it’s nice to treat other people. I’ve learned to try some fantastic healthy recipes now.

“I’ve found healthy food I enjoy. It’s all about eating the right food and the right portion sizes. I still enjoy a treat every now and again.”

Diwali celebrations light up hospital nursery

Children at the Rainbow Nursery at the University Hospital of Hartlepool celebrated the start of the Hindu New Year. The children dressed up to celebrate the Diwali Festival of Lights - one of the most popular dates in the Hindu calendar. Children learned about the celebrations and the story of Rama and Sita. They made colourful pieces of Barfi – an Indian sweet made with coconut and condensed milk and enjoyed traditional arts and crafts.

Nursery manager Janet Bland said: “The children have really enjoyed the celebrations. It’s important to teach them a little bit about different cultures.

“The Festival of Lights celebrations have been a lot of fun. We’re looking forward to enjoying many more cultural events in the future.”

The hospital’s nurseries offer childcare places to children from six weeks to five years and we welcome school children during the school holidays and also provide free early education places for three to five year olds.

For more information you can contact nursery managers Janet Bland at the University Hospital of Hartlepool on 01429 52 2482 or Andrea Hurt or Denise Lakinski at the University Hospital of North Tees on 01642 624770.

Christine with senior health trainer Elaine Russon

Christine shows how much fat she has lost

Nursery nurse Kate Smithson and Rohan Vagadia making traditional Barfi sweets
A kind-hearted patient has donated an amazing £47,000 to the haematology department at the University Hospital of North Tees. Syd Harker, 64 from Stockton, who has been receiving treatment for myeloma – a type of cancer that starts in the bone marrow – wanted to show his appreciation to the team who have been taking good care of him.

Once he had his fundraising idea, Syd soon set the ball rolling. Over six months he sold tickets at £500 to local business people and people all over the country. Tickets were sold each with a number to coincide with the National Lottery bonus ball, with the two prizes being a gypsy cob pony. He said: “People were really generous. Once they found out that the money was for the hospital who have really helped me, they were more than willing to make a donation. I know a lot of travellers all over the country who wanted to buy tickets.

“I’d like to thank everyone who helped me raise the money. All of the staff here are unbelievable. I’m just so grateful to them and this is my way of saying thank you.”

Consultant haematologist Philip Mounter said: “I’m overwhelmed to be accepting such a fantastic donation on behalf of the department. There is no doubt about it that the money will make a big difference to our patients.”
Electrical apprentice Jordan Pearson, 18, was awarded the J R (Jack) Fletcher award for the first year apprentice of the year and medical engineer Kurt Blythman, 19, was awarded the Bill Murray OBE award for the second year apprentice of the year.

Jordan, who lives in Hartburn, and Kurt from Eaglescliffe are both serving advanced apprenticeships with the Northern and Yorkshire NHS Assessment Centre which is responsible for training hospital and medical engineers of the future.

The scheme offers the potential of a career in estates whether that is multi-skilled engineering, medical engineering, carpentry and joinery or plumbing. It is hosted by North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust where a small team runs the estates apprentice training on behalf of all NHS organisations in the Northern and Yorkshire area. Competition for places is tough with over 100 applicants for each available place. So far 374 young people have gone through the scheme and many (25%) have gone on to senior positions in the NHS.

In his welcome address at the ceremony held at The James Cook University Hospital director of estates and facilities at Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust Malcolm Aiston said patients, visitors and often staff see the tip of the iceberg in terms of the many systems which have to operate safely and reliably to provide good patient care.

He said: “For example if you come into the hospital and wash your hands on the way to visiting a sick relative you see the sink and the hot water. You don’t see the work the engineers do to ensure water is at the right temperature, free from harmful bacteria and, of course, that it drains away safely from the site.

Multiply this by the number of sinks and this gives you a small idea of the work of the hospital engineer. Water is just one system they look after; they are also responsible for electricity systems, medical equipment and the fabric of the building.

“These days every doctor and nurse uses equipment to help them provide the best care and it’s our engineers who ensure it is tested regularly and kept in tip top condition.”

Other winners were

The J R (Jack) Fletcher award for the third year apprentice of the year
Adam Graham, medical engineer
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Fourth year apprentice of the year
Kirk Newton, multi craft engineer (electrical)
South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust

Health Estates and Facilities Management Association (Hefma) apprenticeship of the year
Richard Agan, medical engineer
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Each winner received a cup, an engraved silver salver to keep and a voucher to buy tools for their trade.

How the scheme started
Bill Murray, who was chief executive of South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust until 2003, was instrumental in starting the apprentice scheme in 1974. A hospital engineer by background, Bill has always been passionate about the contribution of estates to the built environment and patient care.

Returning to The James Cook University Hospital to present the Bill Murray cup to the best achieving second year apprentice Bill said: “Buildings, equipment and the environment generally are a crucial part of patient care and the apprentice engineers on this scheme get a grounding in engineering which is second to none. People don’t think of engineers and estates staff when they think about who works for the NHS. This is why it’s so good to have events like this where we can celebrate. It’s great for the young people themselves but it’s also good for the NHS in this area because we are providing great career opportunities and investing in a skilled workforce both for now and the future.”

Regional Manager for the Assessment Centre Eileen Bayles added: “Very often apprentice achievements are not recognised, this evening was about celebrating the success of all our apprentices, with parents, trust management, award and funding bodies. I am really proud of all them all and I know and understand how hard they have to work, even though they may not think it at times! The standard is very high which has made it very difficult to choose the winners. They are all good apprentices and in fact they are all winners in their own right!”
Antimicrobial pharmacist Becky Keenan and pre-reg pharmacist Nadira Ramdhan

Pharmacy staff highlighted the need for people to use antibiotics responsibly on European Antibiotic Awareness Day. Antimicrobial pharmacist Becky Keenan plays a key role in supporting infection control, ensuring that antibiotics are correctly prescribed on the wards. She said: “Antibiotics are only effective against bacterial infections. They do not work on most coughs, colds and sore throats. "Unnecessary use of antibiotics can leave the body susceptible to infections like Clostridium difficile. By only using antibiotics when needed we can help reserve them for severe and life threatening infections and prevent other bugs from becoming resistant to antibiotics.”

“If you are suffering with cold symptoms or a sore throat you should rest, take plenty of fluids and speak to a pharmacist who will advise you on over-the-counter remedies.”

Improved service for patients needing urgent care

Patients whose GPs feel they need immediate medical attention are now benefiting from a much improved service at the University Hospital of Hartlepool. North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has streamlined the way patients needing emergency attention is organised with sicker patients being taken straight to the emergency assessment unit and people whose needs are immediate but not as serious being taken straight to the ambulatory care centre.

The unit, which sees an average of 15 - 20 patients a day, was originally opened with three assessment areas but has now expanded to a total of seven within the assessment unit. Matron Fiona McEvoy who is responsible for the services at the University Hospital of Hartlepool said: “Patients can be referred into the ambulatory care unit either by their GP or can be brought in by ambulance. “We now have ambulatory care units at both hospitals which are part of the assessment unit but it means that patients whose illnesses need attention but are not serious or life threatening can be seen quickly by our nurse practitioners and decisions made around there treatment plan.”

Fiona added: “This is a more streamline approach in the way we look after patients with medical problems. Our nurse practitioners can see them straightaway. Often they can be assessed and observed, then go home again shortly afterwards. “Patients and staff prefer the new arrangement and the comments we’ve had so far have been very positive. One patient who has benefitted from the service is John Skilton who lives in Hartfields Retirement Village.

John, who is originally from London, went to see his GP who thought he needed some urgent tests and referred him straight to the ambulatory care unit. John said: “I am very impressed with the service and care I have received. I was brought straight here from my GP and was seen as soon as I arrived. The nurses here are fantastic, they are very caring and I think this is a wonderful service.”

Fiona added: “It’s all about getting the right patient to the right place first time. I’d like to thank all the staff in medicine who have worked hard to set up the new arrangement and are making it such a success.”
Our staff don’t just receive cards and letters from patients; sometimes they get gifts of a more artistic nature. Physiotherapy staff were absolutely delighted to receive a poem from patient, Malcolm Danby from Stockton.

Physiotherapy team leader Serena Hartley said: “We couldn’t believe it when we read the poem. It’s nice to receive any kind of thank you note, but this was just lovely – Malcolm has certainly got a true talent!”

*Physio girls*

The physio girls of North Tees are always eager to please patients like Malcolm are made very welcome and enjoy being put at their ease

Serena so gentle and calm showed never a trace of alarm til Malcolm was naughty and suddenly thought he could swing on the bars with his arms

Rachel who works at a great pace with a cute little smile on her face is well-liked by her clients who come to rely on her pleasant approach to their case

Karen the young looking one lights up the room like the sun so pleasant and sure she helps with the cure for those whose lives are undone

The fair-haired young lady called Clare is eager to start on her share of the programme of work which she never would shirk as her primary aim is to care

Well done to these ladies – thank you without you what would people do? I suffer with “parkey” and can get very “narkey” but with people like you who enjoy a good “larky” my feelings are anything but blue

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust encouraged everyone to think about their lung health in support of World COPD day. World COPD day aims to improve awareness and care of the respiratory condition Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

A team of specialist respiratory nurses and stop smoking advisors held an event at The Central Library in Hartlepool offering people information about COPD, support to quit smoking and simple breathing tests to see how healthy their lungs are.

People also had the chance to call into either the University Hospital of North Tees or the University Hospital of Hartlepool and pick up information from the stands.

Community lead respiratory nurse Dorothy Wood said: “This was a great opportunity to raise awareness of COPD. There are thousands of people who are at risk of this long term disease.

“By encouraging people to think about their lungs and changes in their lung health we can hopefully diagnose them as early as possible, giving us the best chance to improve their health.”

COPD nurse co-ordinator Sandra Stych added: “Many people do not realise they have the disease. It can be slowed down if we can diagnose it early.

Symptoms of COPD include a persistent cough, a wheezy chest, breathlessness and recurrent chest infections.”

Stop smoking service manager Pat Marshall added: “You’re four times more likely to quit smoking if you get help from the stop smoking service – it was excellent to see so many people come along to speak to our advisors. People can also find out how we can help you quit smoking by phoning 01642 383819.”
A generous donation to help bring cheer to poorly children

Children being cared for on the children’s ward at the University Hospital of North Tees can now enjoy the very latest toys and games thanks to some kind-hearted Stockton residents. Bar staff Simone Richardson and Michelle Featherstone who work at the Horners Pub in Stockton and local resident Keith Brookes, organised a number of fundraising events including a sponsored hair cut, sponsored leg wax and a pie and pea supper, raising a grand total of £1,041.05 for the ward.

Michelle said: “We do a couple of fundraising events every year. We wanted to do something for our local hospital. We all know someone who has had their child looked after in hospital. We knew it would be somewhere that would really benefit from the money raised.”

Play specialist Sandra Jackson said: “Our toys and games were becoming a little bit out of date. We’d spoken to children and their parents on the ward and put together a wish list. “We’re just so grateful to receive this donation. It will make such a difference to the children. We’ve already been on a shopping spree and we’ve ticked most of the items off the wish list, including an X-box, games for the Nintendo Wii and the very latest board games. “It’s important for children, not only to receive excellent care, but also to be in an environment where they can feel comfortable and even have some kind of distraction from the reason why they are in hospital. It’s these home comforts which help to do just that. “I’d like to say a big thank you to everyone who helped to raise the money.”

Brothers say thanks for their care

Two brothers have said thank you to the children’s ward at the University Hospital of North Tees for their care. Cameron, 11, suffers with a life threatening condition known as congenital adrenal hyperplasia and has benefited from the care on the ward since he was born. His brother Mitchell, 13, also receives treatment, since he has lost the use of his left kidney.

The boys handed over a fantastic £1,000, which they raised after completing a 10km wakeboard and kneeboard run of Loch Earn in Scotland.

Dad, Peter said: “Cameron completed the run on a wakeboard and Mitchell on a knee board. My colleagues on the Ninian South oil rig brought in £600 sponsorship and a Canadian Natural Resources International donated a further £200 from their charity committee. Family and friends then rounded the donation up to around £1,000.”

Play specialist Sandra Jackson said: “We’re extremely grateful for such a generous donation. We’ve recently started decorating the teen room on the ward and this money would really help towards making sure that room is comfortable for other children of a similar age to Cameron and Mitchell. We’d like to thank the boys and everyone who sponsored them for their generosity.”

Hospital nursery children learn road safety

Children at the Rainbow Nursery at the University Hospital of Hartlepool have been learning how to stop, look and listen.

The road safety team from Hartlepool Borough Council arrived during Road Safety Week to teach the children how to be safe when crossing the road. Children were given a pretend zebra crossing, traffic lights and got the chance to dress up as a lollypop lady.

Nursery manager Janet Bland said: “The children had a brilliant time. It’s important that children learn about road safety. This was a good chance for them to have lots of practice crossing the road safely.”

January 2012
The trust's infection, prevention and control team have been showing staff, patients and visitors how committed the trust is to infection prevention and control by taking part in infection prevention and control week. Infection prevention and control week is held every year to highlight the work that the staff in hospitals and the community do to keep patients safe and free from healthcare associated infections such as MRSA and Clostridium difficile. The team ran an information stand to raise awareness about the importance of controlling infection and what we’re doing to achieve this. 

Director of nursing, patient safety and quality Sue Smith said: “We are committed to reducing infections in our hospitals and we wanted to use infection prevention and control week to reinforce the message to all our staff, patients and visitors - everyone must take responsibility for following good infection control practice and lead by example. “Everyone who enters or leaves the hospital has a part to play in preventing infection. Hand hygiene is the number one way to ensure that you don’t contribute to the spread of infections. You can do your bit by making sure you wash your hands with soap and water at the hand wash sink that is provided at the entrance to the ward or by using the hand rub when you arrive and when you leave the ward.”

Helping to stop the spread of bugs

The event, organised by assistant director community transformation Coleen Milligan and chaired by chief information officer North East Graham Evans, attracted more than 70 delegates from across the region to find out how the trust’s community staff are using mobile working. A number of speakers talked about the different aspects of the project from the patient’s perspective, the clinician, finance and the IT and health informatics project team. The handheld computer that allows community healthcare workers to access patient notes while they’re out on their visits has been used by the trust for more than a year, since the trust participated in the Department of Health National Mobile Health Worker project. The Panasonic Toughbook – a rugged wireless laptop is being used by community nurses and matrons, speech and language therapists and the community stroke team. Staff can use the computers to check and update patient records wherever they go – reducing paperwork and trips back to the office. The Toughbooks operate with high-speed mobile broadband and a built in NHS smart card reader, so there is no sensitive personal information on the Toughbooks themselves. They use a standard system with the clinical records program SystmOne, using a secure private network connection to protect patient confidentiality. Coleen said: “I was delighted with the event, as it was attended by so many health professionals, directors and managers from the region’s NHS organisations. It was an excellent opportunity to discuss the key issues, lessons and benefits of the mobile working solution from a number of perspectives and to hear from presentations from Kathy Drayton, the national clinical lead for mobile working and Karen Robinson national business change lead. It was also a fantastic opportunity for our own staff including Marion Bateson and Ben Ryan to share challenges which we have faced in implementing mobile working and the solutions which have been devised and adopted. “As the only trust in the region to have taken part in the national pilot project it is fantastic for the staff to lead the way in learning the techniques of successful mobile working. We’ve had to overcome a few minor problems along the way but this technology has proved to be extremely beneficial for community colleagues. Having this facility improves the quality of the information available at the patient consultation and reduces staff trips back to the office.” “It’s working really well. We’ve welcomed the opportunity to be the first to test out this new technology and this was a great chance to share that success and learning with other colleagues throughout the region.”

Mobile working showcased at regional conference

The way the trust is using mobile working was showcased at a regional conference.
A fond farewell after a lifetime in the NHS

Quality assurance lead Ann Johnson bid farewell to colleagues and friends after serving 45 years in the NHS. Ann worked as a relief family planning nurse, a health visitor and a senior nurse, before becoming the quality audit lead for the trust in 1995 and quality assurance lead in 2000. Colleagues and friends who have known Ann throughout her career filled the room to say farewell.

Ann said: “Thank you will never say enough to express my appreciation for everyone’s friendship and support over the years. I was overwhelmed at the very special and unique send off I received. “Having so many people join me and also the many messages from people unable to attend, made my last day in the trust very special. I will treasure the beautiful gifts, flowers, cards and sentiments presented to me.

“I have so many good memories from 45 very happy years working in the NHS, most of which were in North Tees community and acute services. It is all the people I have worked with that have made these memories so special. "I know everyone will continue to strive to maintain the highest of quality standards within the trust.”

Kind hearted residents in Billingham put the kettle on to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The event held at St Aiden’s Church in Billingham, which was organised by Norma Sudron, raised a fantastic £590.

Macmillan occupational therapist Helen Caudren said: “We’d like to say a big thank you to Norma and everyone who helped to organise the event and those who came along to make the event a success.”

Clinical research nurses June Battram and Nicky Bateman have become the first research nurses at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust to successfully pass the Accredited Researcher Programme.

The programme, which demonstrates knowledge of good clinical practice gained by formal training and experience, involves an on-line exam with a pass mark of 70%.

All research nurses at the trust are required to have up to date good clinical practice in research training, but June and Nicky are the first to complete this new online accreditation.

June and Nicky, who have more than 25 years nursing experience between them caring for patients with respiratory conditions have both quite recently stepped into a clinical research role.

“We find that patients are often keen to take part in clinical trials because they want to help other people suffering from the same conditions in the future.”

June (pictured left) said: “I’ve been working as a clinical research nurse with respiratory patients for one year now. By taking this exam we hold this accreditation for the next two years. It’s important to set the standards and this does just that.

“It’s very satisfying caring for patients on the wards but I get a massive amount of job satisfaction from working in research too.

“Many people know someone, whether it’s a member of their family or a friend who has a respiratory condition. The clinical trials we run are all about developing treatments for respiratory illnesses such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder.

“Not everyone is suitable to take part in every research study, but there often some research they can take part in. Some research studies can take up to six months or more and others can be as simple as completing a quick questionnaire.

“Every part of research activity is as important as the next, no matter how small – it can make a big difference.”

Nicky continued: “Recruiting volunteers for studies into developing new drugs and therapies to help people to manage their illness is vital. It is a great example of how the local community can help to make a positive impact on the future advances in healthcare.

“Being involved in research can one day make a real difference to the people who suffer from these illnesses. Studies like ours rely on the goodwill of patients who give up their time, to help develop our understanding of respiratory and to explore new options for treatments.

June added: “We find that patients are often keen to take part in clinical trials because they want to help other people suffering from the same conditions in the future. It’s really humbling to work with those people and we’re really grateful to all of those who take part.”

Norma puts the kettle on for Macmillan

Achievement for trust’s clinical research nurses
Colleagues stun with weight loss

Family health colleagues are starting the new year with a fabulous new look after shedding more than a whopping 90lbs between them. Patient safety co-ordinator and senior midwife Janet Alderton has lost a fantastic 54lbs and dropped three dress sizes since the beginning of May last year. Colleague, personal assistant Michelle Allison, is also looking superslim after losing 37lbs and dropping three dress sizes since last March.

Janet, from Hartlepool, joined Weight Watchers to help her on the way to kick-starting a healthier lifestyle. She said: “I personally wanted to lose weight. I didn’t want it to be a quick fix – it’s got to be long term. I’ve still got a little way to go, but the hard work has certainly paid off. It’s really encouraging when a colleague is also losing weight. We’ve been able to support each other. “I’ve recently become a member of Springs gym in Hartlepool. Christmas has been a healthy Christmas. It’s not worth un-doing all of that hard work! I’ve done this for myself, but it’s nice when family and friends notice. Our families have been amazed with the change.” Meanwhile, Michelle chose not to join a weight loss group, but she has stuck to a healthy eating plan and boosted her exercise regime with Zumba classes and regular trips to Splash in Stockton.

Colleagues have watched their transformation with admiration. Michelle said: “It’s nice to receive a compliment. It’s really encouraging to have that support from your colleagues. “My husband has even lost weight without realising. Once you’ve begun to lead a healthier lifestyle, it just becomes a way of life.

“We both love shopping – it’s nice to pick up a bargain. It’s a great way to treat yourself too. I’ve still got a way to go, but we’re both really proud of what we’ve achieved so far.”

More health visitors strengthen the team at North Tees and Hartlepool

The health visiting team at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has been strengthened with the appointment of nine students and two return to practice health visitors.

The recent boost to health visitor numbers follows a recent Department of Health pledge to recruit an additional 4,200 health visitors across the NHS by 2015.

One member of the team in Hartlepool is student health visitor Tracey Ray, 44, from Middlesbrough. She qualified as a registered nurse in 2006.

Mum of two Tracey said: “I didn’t go into nursing until quite late in my career. My husband was in the army and I had various jobs in retail when my daughters were younger. “When my daughters were older, that’s when I decided to go into nursing. I gained experience as a nurse working on an orthopaedic ward, as a district nurse and then on the neonatal unit, before being appointed as a sister with a discharge team.

“It was the hands-on work I really enjoyed. I started to think about a career in health visiting when I was working as a district nurse. I saw an opportunity to make that a reality and I’m really glad I did.”

Student health visitor Gemma Ricketts, 30 from Sedgefield, qualified as a registered nurse in 2003.

Mum of one Gemma said: “I worked as a theatre nurse in New Zealand, then in Devon. After starting a family, I stayed at home until my little girl was two. “When I went back to work, I began working as a community staff nurse in Durham. I was working with the health visiting team and that’s when I got a taste for what the job was all about. I’m really enjoying it and like all of the other students; I’m very much looking forward to a career in health visiting.”

Clinical director for community services Linda Watson said: “This is fantastic news for families across North Tees and Hartlepool. It means that health visitors will be able to visit families more frequently to offer support and advice.

“Health visitors play an important role in helping people improve their health and live longer, healthier lives, providing support and advice to families during early pregnancy, as well as during children’s early years, to improve family health and wellbeing.

“This is a tremendous boost to the service and will go a long way to supporting local families in the community and strengthening their work with GP practices.”

The students will complete a one year training course, which will see them spend half their time at university and the other half working alongside the trust’s health visitors, learning how to put their skills into practice.

If you are a registered nurse considering a career in health visiting or are a former health visitor considering returning to practice please visit www.northeast.nhs.uk/workforce to find out more.
Governor election results announced

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has announced the results of its fifth round of governor elections since becoming an NHS foundation trust in 2007. This election was to fill the seats that had become vacant and for any resignations received during the year. The following candidates were elected:

**Stockton constituency – six vacancies**
- Pat Upton (re-elected)
- Richard Sidney (re-elected)
- Ann Cains
- Dawn Robinson
- Geoffrey Bulmer
- Catherine Linford

**Hartlepool constituency – two vacancies**
- Maureen Rogers (re-elected)
- Margaret Stacey

Chairman Paul Garvin said: “I’m delighted to see some re-elections but it is also great to see some new faces. We have elections every year for around a third of the governor positions. This allows us to bring in some new governors but also keep some continuity for the council of governors which is very important at the time of substantial change in the NHS.”

**Easington constituency – two vacancies**
- John Cairns (re-elected)
- Denise Rowland

**Staff constituency – four vacancies**
- Carol Alexander
- Pat Ferguson
- Matt Wynne
- Nina Bedding

Chairman Paul Garvin said: “I’m delighted to see some re-elections but it is also great to see some new faces. We have elections every year for around a third of the governor positions. This allows us to bring in some new governors but also keep some continuity for the council of governors which is very important at the time of substantial change in the NHS.”

Trust course goes global

A course that started at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has become a benchmark for training all clinical staff in the UK and beyond. Clinical effectiveness advisor John Blenkinsopp (pictured) has been training staff in the trust and elsewhere in critical appraisal for nearly 10 years. John explained: “Critical appraisal is looking at printed research to decide whether the authors are telling us the truth. There is lots of exaggeration in published research so I teach the clinical staff here how to use specific criteria and statistics to measure whether the results are as good as the author says.”

John’s courses have now been recognised nationally by the British Medical Association who are using his training model as a basis for all of their advertised critical appraisal courses available to clinicians. He said: “As a result of teaching my evidence-based practice course here and in other parts of the country, the BMA got in contact with me to work with their staff in London to help design and run some introductory sessions for their members. Originally these courses were aimed at training doctors in the UK, but their popularity led to them being made available to all clinical staff in the UK, Europe and the United States. “This global popularity has now led to a request from the BMA for me to write and present a programme of four separate courses - beginners, advanced, facilitating and refreshing critical appraisal - all of which were piloted at BMA House during 2011.”

Director of nursing, patient safety and quality Sue Smith said: “John quietly gets on with his work and his achievements. internationally is fantastic. We should all be very proud of John and his achievements. Apart from bringing in welcome income to the trust it gets our name known as a benchmark nationally for excellence in evidence-based practice and patient safety. The pilot programme for 2011 has evaluated extremely well throughout this year. I am sure this will lead to more courses being commissioned in 2012.”

If you would like John to run a critical appraisal course in your department please contact john.blenkinsopp@nth.nhs.uk.

Karina bids farewell after 32 years

Colleagues bid farewell to head of supplies Karina Maxwell after 32 years service at the trust. Karina began her career as a junior and worked her way up to become head of supplies.

Acting director of finance Neil Atkinson, who has worked with Karina for the past three years, said: “From day one Karina demonstrated true commitment over the years to the trust. “Colleagues will miss her sense of humour, good nature, her canny knowledge of Slimming World and passion for changing the office around!”

Karina added: “I’ve thoroughly enjoyed working here and I’m looking forward to starting a new chapter.”

“I would like to thank everyone who made my leaving do special. I will miss you all but will keep in touch with the good friends that I have made over the years. “Thanks for the lovely leaving gifts I will think of you all when I wear and use them:”

Choir singers bring festive cheer

The Christmas spirit came to the University Hospital of North Tees when the hospital choir performed in the main reception area before singing in the Carol Service in the chapel.

Karina (second from left) with some colleagues from the supplies department

John Blenkinsopp (pictured)

Karina (second from left) with some colleagues from the supplies department

January 2012
Good nutrition is such an important part of staying healthy, and especially for people who are recovering from illness or injury. Getting the right meals that satisfy a patient’s nutritional needs, as well as their taste, is important in helping them to make a quicker recovery. We’ve taken a look back on the success of the last year and how we’re maintaining and improving these standards for our patients.

Meeting standards in nutrition and dignity

An unannounced inspection which was carried out at the University Hospital of Hartlepool by the Care Quality Commission confirmed that we did meet standards in nutrition and dignity. Assistant director of nursing, quality and patient safety Barbara Carr said: “The very rigorous inspection was carried out within a number of our wards, last April and we were delighted with the report we received. “During the visit patients and staff were interviewed. Staff were asked, what does go on in the organisation? Patients were then asked a number of questions like, do you get assistance with eating and drinking, do you get assistance to use the nurse call? and things like that. The inspection makes sure that what our nurses and doctors says happens, actually does happen. “It is a challenge to maintain the high standards, but for our staff it’s about coming to work to care and to help patients in our hospitals.

“We meet up every week to talk about all of our patients who are receiving this treatment. It’s important to work together as a team."

“We’ve got a very strong nutrition advisory group which I lead and we’ve got really committed doctors, nurses, dietitians and catering representation on the group. "Consultant gastroenterologist Chris Wells has been an absolute driving force around nutrition in the organisation, working with dietitians and nursing teams to bring nutritional elements and nutritional training to medical colleagues as well as to nurses and to catering staff!”

A national report published in 2010, from the National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death (NCEPOD) looked at more than 1,000 cases of artificial - or parenteral - nutrition in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Barbara explained: “This is where liquid containing nutrients are pumped from a bag directly into a vein. It’s given to patients who cannot digest food through the gut as a result of disease or surgery, or to babies whose systems are not developed enough. “It was then that we set up a team to compare what we were doing against the national report. The team made up of a clinical pathologist, dietitian, pharmacist, a surgeon and a nurse is led by consultant gastroenterologist Chris Wells.”

Lead dietitian Julie Higgins said: “We meet up every week to talk about all of our patients who are receiving this treatment. It’s about recognising the need for artificial feeding; starting the right treatment quickly once a decision has been taken. It’s important to work together as a team. “This is something that our trust prides itself on and we do on the whole work very hard to provide excellent care to our patients.”

Barbara said: “It’s going really well, since we introduced it last year. Patients are screened when they are admitted and re-screened weekly during their hospital stay, so their progress can be monitored.”

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Lead dietitian Julie Higgins discusses a patient’s parenteral nutrition with ward sister Catherine Smith

Good nutrition is a MUST for all of our patients

Last year we started using a national screening tool to identify patients who are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition when they are brought into hospital. The validated Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST), which replaces the previous tool is being used to screen and monitor patients and make sure they receive best possible nutritional care.

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Barbara said: “It’s going really well, since we introduced it last year. Patients are screened when they are admitted and re-screened weekly during their hospital stay, so their progress can be monitored. It’s to identify anyone who is at risk of malnutrition.

“This could be patients who are undernourished, patients who have experienced unintentional weight loss, patients who may be avoiding food because of an underlying illness or who might have special nutritional needs connected because of their condition.”

Lead dietitian Julie Higgins added: “Our catering team play a really important role in helping us make sure patients receive nutritious foods that help with their recovery. “Diet chef Joanne Speight makes all of the high energy and high calorie milkshakes, jellies and mousses. We know we can get in touch with Joanne and she’ll work with us to make just what the patients need.”

Diet chef Joanne Speight prepares the high calorie milkshakes for the wards

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A system bringing in mouth-watering meals quickly, offering highly nutritious meals to patients within minutes of their request has been put to the test on the emergency assessment unit and a couple of the surgical wards.

Head of catering Colin Chapman explained: “The iWave system we’ve been testing out uses less energy in comparison to conventional kitchen systems, reduces waste, ensures food temperatures are correct and offers a wide variety of nutritious meals."

“We are looking at it so that if we have a quick turnover where patients can be moved in a shorter period, this is so that we can provide them with a nutritious meal to meet their needs. They may only be there for four to six hours so we are making sure that they get a nice meal while they are there and that is really important. The catering service is working well, but we’re continually looking to improve it and trying out new systems like this one will help us do just that.”

STAMPing out the risk of malnutrition

Lead paediatric dietitian Susanna Earnshaw is leading the way at the trust, with the Screening Tool for the Assessment of Malnutrition in Paediatrics (STAMP).

The tool, which was developed by a team at Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the University of Ulster is in the process of being introduced at the trust, following a recent pilot. It’s made up of five simple steps and is a quick and reliable way of identifying children who have poor nutrition when they are brought into hospital.

Protected meal times

Protected mealtimes on the wards are supporting and encouraging patients to eat and drink properly and allow them to eat in a calm and relaxed environment, with help from staff who can support those people who find it difficult to feed themselves or need support.

Barbara said: “During protected mealtimes access is restricted to the wards three times a day when the meals are served.

“Protected mealtimes for breakfast, lunch and dinner make sure that we focus on food three times a day. It’s about remembering how important a mealtimes is, and making sure every patient gets to eat their meal with as few distractions as possible, just like they would at home.

“Our staff can then make sure the patients are comfortable, to assist them in eating their meals and make sure they are getting the food and drink they need.”

Mouth-watering meals in minutes

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Students nurse Bushra Akram takes a meal to a patient on a red tray

Red is the colour

Patients who need help with eating are being served meals on red trays. It is just one of the initiatives to be introduced by the trust so that patients who need assistance at mealtimes consistently receive the nutrition they need.

Barbara said: “The red tray system has been introduced onto our elderly care wards at the University Hospital of North Tees and the University Hospital of Hartlepool.

“Patients often need assistance because of a physical problem or they might need a little extra help because they have dementia.”

“It indicates to staff that these particular patients need a little extra help with eating and drinking.

“Malnutrition and poor hydration can have serious consequences for patients. This is a simple step to make sure they have enough to eat and drink.

“Patients often need assistance because of a physical problem or they might need a little extra help because they have dementia.”

“Healthcare staff and our voluntary patient helpers, who have been given special training, are always on hand to help when the patients need it.”

Ward hostess Claire Corking
Celebrating PACES’ tenth birthday

To mark the 10th anniversary of the PACES examination, the trust was presented with a commemorative plaque in recognition of its continuing commitment to PACES. The MRCP(UK) part 2 clinical examination, commonly known as PACES has now been running for 10 years. During that time MRCP(UK) has assessed over 22,800 candidates in 256 examination centres and 11 countries. None of this would have been possible without the support of the examination centres and examiners in hospitals.

The trust was recognised as one of the centres who has consistently dedicated their facilities to the examination by assessing more than 100 candidates and hosting the examination for seven days or more over the last three years. Chief executive Alan Foster said: “I’d like to thank you all for making this a centre of excellence in preparing our future consultants.”

Trust commended at national cleaning awards

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has been given a clean bill of health for its efforts in raising standards of cleanliness. The commendation came at the Health Business Awards for the hospital cleaning award, where the trust was shortlisted along with two other hospitals in recognition of its work in deep cleaning and chemically disinfecting wards to help reduce the risk of hospital acquired infections spreading.

Praise was given for the thorough work the trust is doing to tackle the spread of infection, decanting the wards and using hydrogen peroxide vapour fogging to clean the rooms which kills even the most volatile of infections.

Assistant director of facilities and hygiene Sue Shannon said: “We’re delighted to have been recognised with this award. It shows the tremendous improvement in cleanliness and infection control standards and this is because of the hard work and commitment our staff have to improving patient safety.”

Nursery children enjoy festive fun

Nursery children at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation enjoyed the festive fun. Children received presents from Santa, as he made a special detour to the University Hospital of Hartlepool and the University Hospital of North Tees. Proud parents and their families were dazzled with a special Christmas show before the day was finished off with a Christmas party.

Childcare co-ordinator Margaret Hayden said: “Christmas is always a magical time for the children and this definitely added some extra sparkle to the nursery. Everyone had a wonderful time, meeting Santa and singing festive songs.

“The children were wonderful in the Christmas play – I’m sure we have some very proud parents. It was lovely for families to join together to start the Christmas celebrations.”

Domestic assistants Janet Coxon, Sue Small, Lesley Blakemore, domestic supervisor Ann Seymour, domestic manager Mary Davie, quality and decontamination manager Graeme Kelly and assistant director of facilities and hygiene Sue Shannon
Paperless handover helps improve patient care

A new system, the first of its kind in the region and thought to be one of the first in the country, is revolutionising the way paediatricians work in the children’s ward at the University Hospital of North Tees. Previously doctors filled in paper handover sheets containing all the names of their patients on their ward rounds but now an electronic system is allowing doctors to see and update information in real time so they can see what the latest situation is for each child on the ward at any time.

Consultant paediatrician Anil Tuladhar explains: “The paper system could lead to information being lost or left in patient’s rooms. It worked, but it wasn’t 100 per cent reliable and often it meant tracking down the doctor to find the handover sheet.

“I approached IT and asked if it was possible to have some sort of paperless system on a central server which could be updated from the computers on wheels we use outside the patient’s room on ward rounds. Within a short space of time ICT support officer Chris Bellerby came up with the solution; an icon on the desktop of the computer which we simply click to take us to the handover sheet.

“The beauty of the system is that we can update the sheet as we’re doing our ward rounds. We can tell parents their children can go home while we’re on the ward round so that the arrangements needed can be out into place. Previously we would have had to wait until the end of the ward round so this has made the process better for patients and their parents and much smoother for us.”

As well as being able to click the icon on the desktop of the computers on wheels and at the nurses’ stations, doctors can now see the handover sheet when they are in their resource room on a large TV screen.

Anil continued: “This has been a major benefit because it means we can see the information and discuss how things are going with the patient when we’re at our regular doctors’ meetings. The consultant at the University Hospital of Hartlepool can also see the handover sheet as can the paediatric assessment unit, so if a patient has been on the assessment unit and needs to come into the ward we can read the information quickly.

“As with every new system there were sceptics but after a very short time we are all now wondering why we hadn’t done something like this sooner. It’s a simple solution but is proving to be a real asset to the department and the care of our young patients. We had a fantastic response from IT who came up with a workable solution in next to no time. We’re starting to see all sorts of other applications which can improve the way work and therefore improve care.”

Consultant paediatricians Anil Tuladhar and Venkata Paturi discuss a patient’s treatment using the paperless handover sheet

Day nurseries raise funds for Pudsey

Staff and children at the trust’s day nurseries handed over more than £450 to this year’s Children in Need appeal.

North Tees Day Nursery pulled on their PJs with a special party and made Pudsey shaped biscuits, while children at Rainbow Nursery at the University Hospital of Hartlepool spent the week selling cakes.

Child care co-ordinator Margaret Hayden said: “We feel very proud to have supported the Children in Need campaign. The children and staff had a really enjoyable time. Thank you to everyone who made a donation.”

Got a story for Anthem?

If you’ve got something to share with other Anthem readers please email communications@nth.nhs.uk or phone 01642 624339.
A team of alcohol specialist nurses have joined North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust to help tackle the number of alcohol-related admissions at its hospitals. Alcohol specialist nurses Helen Clay and Kirsty Willis are providing the service led by consultant physician Richard Thomas, who will work directly with patients at the University Hospital of Hartlepool and the University Hospital of North Tees.

Helen, a nurse prescriber has more than 20 years general nursing experience, working in acute medicine and with a specialist community alcohol care team in the local area.

Kirsty, a qualified mental health nurse has experience of working with people dependent on drugs and alcohol. The service has been set up to reverse the increasing number of alcohol related admissions that the trust experiences in line with a number of national initiatives.

The service runs between 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. Patients can be seen by an expert within 24 hours of being admitted or if they are admitted on a weekend they’ll be seen on the Monday.

Helen said: “We’re here to support patients who need some help with their drinking habits and give them support and advice so that they are less likely to need to come back into hospital.”

Kirsty added: “We’re providing support to the ward staff, raising awareness of these patients’ needs and giving expert advice for these patients when it’s needed and reducing the risk of them being brought back into hospital.

“We can then work with other medical staff and community organisations to make sure the patients get the support they need when they leave hospital. We need to find ways of giving people the support that is most appropriate to their needs. We’re helping people who have a clearly recognised alcohol dependence realise the long-term damage they are doing to their health.”

Consultant physician Richard Thomas said: “Helen and Kirsty are providing essential help to patients in reducing the harm caused by excessive drinking.

“The time they spend with patients is a valuable opportunity to encourage them to think about changing their drinking habits and to signpost the patients to further information and advice when they leave hospital.”
Pauline recognised for dedicated long service

Advanced biomedical scientist Pauline Stark in the cervical cytology department was delighted to be presented with a long service award for more than 40 years service at the trust. Pauline who started her career at Sedgefield hospital was praised by clinical director of pathology John Frater. He said: “I found out that Pauline had not initially liked biochemistry when she was younger, but despite this Pauline has actually worked in the department for 44 years. She is a valued and well respected colleague.”

Pauline added: “It's down to the people with who I've worked with - old and new, I have worked with wonderful people and that is what makes the job.”

Joint replacement patients say thanks for THANKS

A group which provides advice and support to patients undergoing a hip or knee replacement has proved a lifeline for many patients. THANKS - Total Hip and Knee Support - was set up nine years ago and meets in the Stockton area to support local patients. Its chairman Neville Alderton, who has had hip replacements himself, said: “When patients are put on the list for an operation they are naturally quite anxious and have questions they want to ask but often do not want to bother the doctors or nurses with.

“Thanks to our good relationships with the team at the University Hospital of North Tees and the University Hospital of Hartlepool which is now the trust’s centre for planned joint replacement, we go along to the education classes organised to give patients advice and information and share our own experiences.

“It's often not until someone is half way out of the door that they will ask us about the things that are bothering them. We don't offer any medical advice of course - there is a great team of experts here to do that - the information we’re giving is about how people cope with some of the practicalities.”

Joint replacement services manager Jackie Grosvenor said: “Any big operation is worrying and I know the medical, nursing and physiotherapy team try their best to answer people’s questions. However there’s nothing to replace talking to people who have actually been through what you’re going through. The orthopaedic team is extremely grateful to Neville and all the members of THANKS who very generously give their time to support patients. We know from the feedback we get it is very much appreciated and complements the care given by the team.”

If you would like to know more about THANKS please contact chairman Neville Alderton on 01642 584214.

Five star catering service

A food hygiene inspection by Stockton Borough Council has awarded five stars for the fourth year to the University Hospital of North Tees, as part of the Tees Valley Food Hygiene Award. Stockton Borough Council, in conjunction with the four other Tees Valley Councils (Middlesbrough, Darlington and Redcar and Cleveland and Hartlepool) introduced a scheme known as the Tees Valley Food Hygiene Award.

The scheme allows members of the public to see the results of the food hygiene inspection in the form of a star rating, which is based on:

- Hygiene conditions (how well the premises handle, prepare and store food)
- Structural conditions (is the premises in good repair and clean)
- Confidence in management (how likely is it that standards will be maintained or improved)

Head of catering Colin Chapman said “This is excellent news. I would like to congratulate the staff on all of their hard work in maintaining this standard.

“It is important for patients, staff and visitors that the standards of catering remain high.”

Executive chef Craig Hooker, chef Ian Cannon, store person Christine Owens, picker and packer Lucy Littlewood and head of catering Colin Chapman
Turn over a new leaf and take a step towards a healthier lifestyle

Health trainers at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust are passing on useful tips for people wanting to turn over a new leaf in the New Year. Health trainer manager Sharon Bartram said: “The new year is the perfect time to make that change you’ve been talking about. Whether it’s to shed some excess weight or just maintain a healthy weight.

“Winter is the time to get outside, wrap up warm and get active. It’s tempting to reach for your slippers rather than your trainers and spend the winter in front of the TV. That’s why people tend to gain weight during the winter.

“It’s easy to slip into bad eating habits, but these can be damaging in the long term. But there are simple ways to beat that weight gain. “By keeping active you’ll boost your mood and stay in shape. Get wrapped up warm and go for a brisk walk or, if the weather is awful, you can get to your local leisure centre.

“Make sure you eat a balanced diet. Eat three healthy meals a day and make sure you eat a wide variety of food to get the nutrients, vitamins and minerals you need.

“It’s all about making healthy choices. Being overweight can put your health at risk. Losing even a small amount of weight can make a big difference.

“Taking small positive steps towards a healthier lifestyle will make you feel better and help you manage your weight too. It is easier to fit small changes into your day-to-day life than to change everything in one go. “By eating sensibly over the winter and trying to keep active — either in or out of the home — you’ll be starting the New Year fighting fit and ready for spring.”

If you feel you need any support in improving your lifestyle you can get in touch with the health trainers on 01642 383833.

Vicki puts her running shoes to say thank you

Mum Vicki Stainer put on her running shoes to say thank you to the team who have looked after her daughter.

Vicki, from Ingleby Barwick, is a PE teacher at Laurence Jackson School in Guisborough. She had completed the Great North Run a couple of times before, but this time Vicki wanted to give something back to her local health service. She said: “My daughter Hannah, eight, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when she was 3 ½. It’s nice to be giving something back to Bev and the team who have been so supportive to my family.

“I completed the run in one hour 59 minutes and I’m delighted to be handing over £500 to the fund which will help other children who have type 1 diabetes. I’d like to thank family, friends and colleagues for generously sponsoring me.”

Specialist diabetes nurse Bev Day added: “We’re really grateful to Vicki for supporting the service we provide to children with type 1 diabetes. Donations like this are really valuable to us and will be used to fund educational programmes and social events for other children, like Hannah, who have type 1 diabetes.”

Move over Richard... here’s Jaxen

Young Jaxen Lamb could soon be following in the footsteps of entrepreneurs like Duncan Bannatyne and Richard Branson.

The 10-year-old from West Park Primary School in Hartlepool has raised £152.10 for the breast fund at the University Hospital of Hartlepool and his parents didn’t even know he was doing it.

Jaxen made decorative ribbons at home and sold them at school and even designed and printed posters to advertise them himself.

His mum Susan said: “We knew nothing about it until the ink ran out on the printer at home. We are so proud of him.”

Breast care co-ordinator Karen Milburn said: “We are extremely grateful to Jaxen for the donation, it’s absolutely fantastic, especially when you realise that the amount was raised in just one day.”
Welcome to our new student nurses and midwives

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has welcomed more than 50 student nurses and midwives as they begin their training.

The students from Teesside University will spend the next three years studying towards a BSc in adult nursing, child nursing or midwifery.

Senior nurse practice placement facilitator Jean Angus said: “We’re delighted to welcome the new students to the trust. They’ll spend the next three years working in different placements at the University Hospital of North Tees, the University Hospital of Hartlepool and in the community.”

Senior nurse practice placement facilitator Sharon Oyston added: “We’ll be supporting the students every step of the way. We’d like to wish them the very best of luck for the next three years and we very much look forward to working with them all.”

Boro stars spread festive cheer

Boro stars took some time out from their hectic schedules to help spread some festive cheer at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Young patients on the children’s ward and in the children’s accident and emergency department were delighted when the group of players arrived with sacks full of Christmas presents and signed footballs. They visited each room handing out presents, speaking to the children, signing autographs and posing for photos with the children and their families.

Children’s ward manager Julie Clennett said: “Children don’t want to be in hospital over Christmas time, so having a surprise visit from the footballers always brings a smile to their face and it’s really good of the team to give up their time to do this.”

Fundamental role to support patient care

Lead pharmacist Alda Hummelinck is supporting staff in the community to ensure their patients are receiving the most appropriate medication in a safe way.

Alda said: “My unique role is making a difference to patients because the medication patients were prescribed at the time may no longer be right for them now. I can help make sure that they always get the treatment they need.

“Another big part of my role is educating patients. I regularly speak at cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation groups and the Breathe Easy group.”

“I carry out comprehensive medication reviews for patients with more complicated medication regimes. For example, if a patient has difficulty swallowing, I can see whether their tablets can be changed to liquid or if there are any other ways around the problem. I am here to work with staff in the community and to give advice if they’ve got any concerns about the use of medications.

“Another big part of my role is educating patients. I regularly speak at cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation groups and the Breathe Easy group. I talk to the patients about the medications they are taking, possible side affects and things they can do to help themselves. I’m here for them to ask me questions too. It’s all about making people feel more confident about their medicines.”
A revolution in varicose vein surgery

A surgeon at the University Hospital of North Tees has carried out his 100th case of pioneering varicose vein surgery on a 49-year-old woman from Peterlee. Vascular surgeon Andrew Parry is leading the way across Teesside with a new technique called the VNUS Closure procedure. The technique, which can be carried out in the outpatients department under local anaesthetic, causes much less bruising and pain than the traditional surgical stripping. It involves passing a tiny catheter into the affected vein and heating the vein wall from inside. The heat causes the vein to shrink and close. The catheter is removed and blood then simply re-routes around the healthy veins. Most patients are able to return to work and all their normal daily activities the day after treatment.

Andrew Parry said: “Varicose veins happen when the valves which should control blood flow either leak or stop working. Treatments are still available on the NHS for patients at risk of leg ulcers because of their varicose veins and those with severe skin staining or varicose bleeding. Most patients are suitable for the VNUS Closure technique which we can usually provide as a walk in walk out treatment using local anaesthetic.”

Mum of two Dawn Musgrave developed varicose veins four or five years ago, she thinks from her job where she was standing on the spot all day. On top of that she developed severe eczema on her legs which was itchy and sore. She was very self conscious of her legs which often swelled up and were so discoloured she resorted to wearing leg make up. She couldn’t wear socks or boots for any length of time. Following the VNUS Closure treatment on her left leg at the beginning of September the eczema has now cleared up. She said: “I’d heard of people having their veins stripped and being black and blue afterwards and I didn’t want to go through that. When I had my left leg done with the VNUS Closure procedure in September I was quite apprehensive because I didn’t know what to expect. The treatment wasn’t like I thought it would be. It was quick, there was no pain just a little bit of aching and nothing I couldn’t cope with. “I went to Edinburgh with my husband recently and walked miles and miles. I wouldn’t have been able to do that before.”

Andrew Parry continued: “The VNUS Closure technique is a far cry from the varicose vein surgery people were used to, where people stayed in hospitals to recover from the operation and general anaesthetic and then may have needed six weeks or more to return to their normal activities. “This treatment is just one example of how advances in surgical techniques are revolutionising the care we can provide for patients. It’s effective, it’s better for the patient because they can get back to normal almost straightaway and it’s better for the health service because it uses fewer resources like expensive hospital beds and theatre time.”

For an in-depth interview with Andrew Parry, Dawn Musgrave and further information about the procedure please go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1aLQdDOiho.

Dawn is awake and chats to the theatre nurse as the procedure is carried out

Say it with flowers – Andrew Parry and development manager Darren Herbert from equipment manufacturer Covidien present Dawn with a bouquet
Leadership award for Steven

Community nurse Steven Yull (pictured), who is also a facilitator for the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement’s productive community programme, has won an inspirational leader award. He was nominated by improvement and development facilitator Gary Wright at an event which celebrated the success of the productive series and lean working.

Gary said: “Steven is a well respected nurse in the community and he has been instrumental in driving the productive community programme. The programme is making a significant difference in the way community colleagues work. It is improving their environment and working conditions so they can concentrate on looking after patients.”

Steven said: “It was a surprise to be nominated and I was really pleased to win when there were so many strong candidates. The productive programme is all about releasing time spent on wasteful activities so colleagues can do what they came into the health service to do; to look after their patients.”

Chief nurse launches trust’s nursing strategy

The trust was delighted to welcome chief nurse of NHS North of England Jane Cummings to the University Hospital of North Tees to officially launch its nursing and midwifery strategy.

The strategy, developed by nurses and midwives for nurses and midwives, sets out the trust’s vision for nursing care and details an ambitious programme for the next five years. There are seven themes outlined in the strategy described by the acronym RESPECT.

- Responsive
- Equipped
- Safe and secure
- Person centred
- Evidence based
- Care and compassion
- Timely

Director of nursing, patient safety and quality Sue Smith said: “It was an honor to welcome Jane Cummings to launch our strategy. As a nurse myself I appreciate our role is a privilege but also a responsibility. No one forgets the good – or the bad – nurse.

However for a nurse to deliver his or her care to patients and their families they must have the support of the organisation at all levels and this has been beautifully summed up in the acronym RESPECT.”

At the launch of the trust’s nursing and midwifery strategy, chief nurse of NHS North of England Jane Cummings said: “It was absolutely fantastic to be invited here today and have the opportunity to meet some of the staff who work on the front line with patients day in and day out and to understand from them what’s important to them in terms of the care that they give, and this nursing strategy absolutely embodies that.

“The fact the staff were involved in the development of it and the key areas of work in and around the RESPECT agenda are absolutely fundamental.

“I’ve spent some time going round and talking to staff on some of the wards and departments and it’s been amazing to listen to their stories and look at some of the good work they are doing.”

Radio Stitch fundraiser

Thanks to everyone who bought raffle and tombola tickets to support the trust’s hospital radio – Radio Stitch. They raised £450 which will go towards a new computer to hold the station’s music on.
General physician with interest in kidney disease joins the trust

A physician who has a special interest in kidney disease has been appointed to strengthen the medical team at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. Based at the University Hospital of Hartlepool but working across both hospital sites consultant physician Sarju Shrestha will work with the medical and nursing team in the University Hospital of Hartlepool’s emergency assessment unit.

Sarju trained at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle and with the renal team at The James Cook University Hospital. During his training he developed an interest in acute (sudden) kidney injury and chronic kidney disease. He said: “While many of us have an awareness of heart, chest and liver disease, kidney disease can often be silent because its effects are not as obvious as, say, something like breathlessness or changes in skin colour which occur when people have liver disease. “People with uncontrolled blood pressure or diabetes often develop chronic kidney disease. This can lead to needing to be on dialysis, needing a transplant or - in the worst case - fatal. By far the best action is to monitor these patients carefully. We cannot reverse the damage already done to the kidneys but we can slow it down. “People can also develop acute kidney injury if they are dehydrated or when they become unwell. The pain killers such as ibuprofen or the drugs people take to control blood pressure can damage the kidneys when they are dehydrated or are unwell. So, identification of patients at risk of kidney injury and appropriate response along with close monitoring are the best ways to prevent it. This can be done in hospital and in the community.”

“I would really like to raise the profile of this silent problem because it is common, preventable or at the very least possible to slow down the rate of long term damage. It’s costly, not only to the person, but also to the health service if we ignore this common condition. Along with my work on the emergency assessment unit I will be concentrating on developing good systems in the trust and links with primary care to raise awareness and see if we can tackle this problem together.”

 clinical director for medicine and elderly care Jean MacLeod said: “We’re delighted to have Sarju on the team. His expertise in this area will be a real asset to the trust and will improve the services we can offer to people whose medical conditions put them at risk of kidney disease.”

Trust hosts event to highlight advances in intensive care

The trust was delighted to host the autumn meeting of the North of England Intensive Care Society (NEICS). The event attracted more than 120 health professionals, including consultants, trainees in intensive care, nurses and allied health professionals. Delegates heard about a number of interesting topics in intensive care medicine from excellent speakers from all over the country.

Consultant anaesthetist Farooq Brohi said: “The feedback received from delegates was very positive. “I’d like to thank the organising team - Suresh Sridharan, Ola Shalaby and Chris Perry who worked very hard in this making this meeting a success. On behalf of myself and the organising team I’d like to thank NEICS for giving us the opportunity to organise this event, and for the invaluable help we received from the NEICS team – Peter Ritchie, Diane Monkhouse and Ian Nesbitt in making this event a success.”

Long service award for Billy

For someone who only planned to stay in the job about a year Billy Henderson has reached a major milestone. Following his retirement in September he was invited back to the University Hospital of Hartlepool to receive a 40 years long service award.

Commercial director Kevin Oxley presented Billy with his award as former colleague and building office Alan Blogg looked on. Kevin said: “Being from an estates and facilities background myself I know and appreciate the work that goes on behind the scenes to keep our buildings working well. It takes a lot of commitment and 41 years in Billy’s case is no mean feat.”

Billy said: “I had only planned to stay for about a year but I got to know people, I met my wife Hilary who was a nurse here. The lads are great to work with. My work involved installing toilets and wash basins as well as unblocking drains, not such a pleasant job. My very first job was glazing the physio department. I’d never done anything like that before. I wouldn’t like to say how much glass I went through to get that job right! I’m enjoying my retirement spending time on my allotment, doing jobs for the family and following my football team.”

Kevin added: “Without knowing it many thousands of people will have benefited from Billy’s work. On behalf of everyone in the trust I want to thank him and assure him that his work and contribution to the trust has been very much appreciated.”

January 2012
Trust supports charity set up to tackle bowel disease

The trust has supported a local charity set up to tackle bowel disease. Support Your Bowel set itself a target of raising £62,000 in five years to buy an ultrasound machine which provides early detection of bowel-related conditions.

The charity has achieved its target in record time, helped by a donation of £30,000 from the trust and the specialist machine is now on order.

Voluntary patient helpers take their first steps on the wards

The trust’s voluntary patient helpers took their first steps out on the wards as they joined director of nursing, patient safety and quality Sue Smith and her senior nursing team on a patient experience and quality standards panel.

Sue said: “This was a great opportunity for the volunteers to see what it is like on the wards and actually speak to some of the patients. The volunteers are part of the patient experience team. It’s all about making sure the patient has the best care and experience while they are being treated in our hospitals.

“It was really nice to see how much the patients appreciated having someone there for a chat. It’s about having that human touch. “The trust is lucky enough to already have hundreds of volunteers, such as those working in the WRVS shops, on the welcomers service and the chaplaincy. Many of them have supported the trust for many years. It’s a great opportunity for anyone just wanting to give something back to the community, do something to develop their skills or anyone who is hoping to have a career in healthcare and wants to get some experience.

Volunteers can give as little or as much time as they can offer and must be 16 or over. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer and you’d like to find out more please contact Linda York on 01642 383273.

Generous donation brightens up the children’s ward

A generous donation from a local business has helped to brighten up the children’s day unit at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Fine Industries donated an amazing £2,500 which has been used to completely transform the corridors in the day unit.

Commercial artist Stephen Robson was commissioned to brighten the unit with a cheerful coloured fun park scene on the walls.

Chief executive and chairman of Fine Industries Keith Hanson said: “We like to try and support local families and organisations. We also raise funds for worthy charities throughout the year. “It was a pleasure to come to the day unit and see the finished result. It’s great to see what a difference it has made. The artwork is fantastic and it’s nice to be able to give the children, their families and even the staff on the ward something they can enjoy.”

Ward manager Julie Clennett said: “Children can be quite frightened coming into hospital. The day unit looks so much brighter and it’s really appreciated by all those who use it and their families.”
Health records staff at the University Hospital of North Tees raised a fantastic £455 for the hospital’s breast unit, as they celebrated Pink Day. Colleagues pushed the boat out with a selection of tasty pink goodies for sale and tombola to boost funds.

Personal assistant Marion Atkinson said: “We enjoy doing our bit with fundraising and the team really make an effort and bring in lots of home made cakes to sell. “A very big thank you to everyone who helped us raise the funds.”

December marked the annual opening of chief executive Alan Foster’s piggy bank. Throughout the year Alan collects his loose change which at the end of the year is donated to a worthy cause. This year the money is going to go towards providing hospitality to the families of patients who are on the end of life care pathway.

Hospital chaplain Lynn Purves said: “We are extremely grateful to Alan for this kind donation, I know it will provide comfort to families who are going through a very hard and stressful time.”

Friends and colleagues gathered to say farewell to associate director of emergency pathways Gill Carton. Gill was involved in emergency and winter planning as well as the changes in urgent and emergency care in Hartlepool.

Fun was had by mums and their children at children’s centres in Stockton on Tees. The final party at Footsteps Children’s Centre, organised by the trust and Stockton Borough Council brought together mums and their little ones from the centre’s breastfeeding support group. There was plenty of Christmas cheer with games and delicious treats for the mums and a special visit from Santa.

Breastfeeding co-ordinator for North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust Ros Nunn said: “Christmas is a special time for all families and it was lovely to celebrate with the new mums. The support groups have gone from strength to strength and are really valuable to many breastfeeding mums.”
The Croft restaurant at the University Hospital of Hartlepool hosted a very special Christmas party. Strangely principal embryologist Dave Gibbon was nowhere to be seen as Santa brought presents for every baby at the assisted reproduction unit’s annual get together. The unit’s biggest party yet was attended by many grateful parents and their precious babies. Among them was Marsha Hockridge, mum to baby Kara. She said: “The treatment here is really fantastic. They take really good care of you.” Another mum, Kerry Gough, was delighted to be at the party with partner Maurice and baby daughter Sinead. She said: “Staff in the unit have been so supportive to us.”
Christmas party

Principal embryologist Dave Gibbon said: "Christmas is such a special time and there are many couples here who are now celebrating as a family thanks to the skill of the team in the unit. Staff here are also passionate about raising funds to support the work of the unit. They raised all the money for the party and presents.

Clinical lead for the unit Hany Mostafa said: “We are using fertility techniques here in Hartlepool which rival any London clinic. For example we now use a technique where we culture the cells to a more advanced stage before implanting the embryo in the womb. The technique mimics what would happen in nature and we’re seeing good results.”

You can find out more about the assisted reproduction unit at www.nth.nhs/aru.
Stockton district nursing goes 24/7

The trust is now providing a 24 hour, seven days a week district nursing service in Stockton on Tees.

The service reflects what has been provided in Hartlepool now for a number of years and sees out of hours care in patients’ homes between 8pm and 8am, given to patients with life limiting illnesses that have complex health care needs.

Clinical lead for out of hours district nursing, Caroline Fitzsimons (pictured) said: “The service in Stockton was previously provided by Butterwick Hospice Care and we’re delighted to have welcomed the staff who have transferred to the trust to provide the service.

“This is a fantastic development for the trust’s community services. We have the opportunity to provide high quality co-ordinated care to those people with palliative care needs to long term conditions management in Stockton on Tees.

Many patients who the district nursing team care for are able to remain at home with support from the out of hours team, without unnecessary hospital admissions.

“Not only is this excellent news for the trust, but also for the patients, who we can ensure will continue to receive excellent care from the team.”

Shining star for Jacob

When illness prevented volunteer welcomer from attending the trust’s first Shining Star event chief executive Alan Foster thought it would be good to present him with his ward in the department where he does a lot of his voluntary work.

Alan arrived in lung health at the University Hospital of North Tees to find a department full of colleagues keen to be photographed with Jacob and acknowledge his special achievement.

Jacob had won the outstanding contribution to volunteering category in the Shining Stars awards but was unfortunately unable to make it because he was unwell.

Alan Foster said: “Jacob is a familiar face at North Tees and I wanted to ensure he got this richly deserved award.”

So long to Mike

December saw the retirement of building services manager Mike Richards.

Mike, who had responsibility for buildings and grounds maintenance, had worked at the trust, man and boy since June 1980. He was responsible for many building improvement schemes and refurbishments and more recently had particular involvement with replacement window schemes and the construction of car parking areas.

At a retirement celebration held in his honour capital planning manager Gareth Neal said: “Mike will be greatly missed by everyone who came into contact with him, he was a very conscientious worker but was always very laid back and had a very dry sense of humour.

“He has left a lasting impression on everyone, as anyone who uses the car parks at North Tees will testify.”

Putting the region’s future consultants to the test

Skills of the region’s future consultants were put to the test on a two day intensive examination hosted by the trust on behalf of the Northern Deanery for paediatric trainees in preparation for their exams.

The membership of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health exams were hosted by consultant paediatrician Poothirkovil Venugopalan.

He said: “Students moved from station to station every few minutes and at each station sits an assessor who quizzed them to a set marking scheme.

“Students were asked about specific test results, pieces of equipment, examining a volunteer patient, or be an observation of the student talking to an actor concerning a clinical problem.

“It’s a good and fair way to check on a student’s clinical knowledge and skills.

“I’d like to thank local children and their parents and pay tribute to my medical and paediatric colleagues for making the event a success.”

Students stop for a photo with consultants and nursing colleagues.
**Ward enjoys a decorative Christmas**

The elderly care ward at the University Hospital of North Tees enjoyed a decorative Christmas thanks to a generous donation from a local Tesco store. Decorations including a beautiful Christmas tree and indoor lights brought festive cheer to the ward.

Community champion for Tesco Barbara Stonehouse said: “We are delighted to help brighten up Christmas for anyone who has to spend this time of year in hospital whether as a patient, visitor or member of staff.”

Ward sister Liz Ogilvie said: “We are very grateful for such a kind donation. It has really helped us to make this ward look fantastic for our patients this Christmas.”

**An apple a day**

The trust has achieved further recognition for efforts to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment.

In November 2011 chief engineer Stuart Watkin took a trip to London to visit the House of Commons where he was presented with a Green Apple Environmental Award.

The silver award was presented in recognition of our carbon management programme which sets out how we plan to reduce our emissions, how we can influence other organisations to do the same, and how we are preparing for the effects of climate change.

Stuart said: “It was a great honour to be presented this award. It is like having the seal of approval stamped on our carbon management plan and gives us great encouragement.

“However awards will not reduce carbon emissions all by themselves, it is now down to everyone at the trust to work together to deliver the targets that we have set ourselves in the plan.”

The Green Apple Awards are run by The Green Organisation, a non-profit environment group dedicated to recognising, rewarding and promoting environmental best practice.

The awards are now in their eighteenth year and well established as one of the major environmental recognition schemes, both in the UK and internationally.

**E-rostering helping trust to be safe and cost effective**

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust is using new technology to ensure wards are staffed appropriately. Since 2009 the trust has been using a software tool called HealthRoster to shrink staffing overheads and improve care to patients through more consistent staffing personnel on wards, bringing agency staff use down considerably.

Since 2009 the trust has saved more than £550,000 on staff costs.

Since introducing HealthRoster, senior nurses can now see at a glance how staff rosters impact patient care and ward budgets. They can quickly plan for peaks in activity, forecast shift requirements and log staff absences. Before this system was introduced they trust relied on laborious paper-based systems which led to inconsistencies and were very time consuming.

Nursing resource manager Esther Blakey (pictured) said: “Each pound spent should bring maximum benefit and quality of care to patients. This is exactly how we have approached this project. Not only have we equipped our staff with the tools they need to ensure their wards are adequately staffed and free from administrative errors, we’ve also minimised clinical risk by putting assurances in place to determine appropriately qualified staff are allocated to bank duties. On multiple fronts, this is a significant step in the right direction.”

Ward sisters June Costello and Liz Ogilvie with Barbara Stonehouse and the beautifully decorated tree.

Stuart Watkin with shadow health minister Liz Kendall
Chest disease and the £40m challenge on the members’ agenda

At the latest member event consultant physician Richard Harrison gave a presentation about chest disease in the north east. Richard explained that Teesside is, unfortunately, a world heritage site for chest disease because of its industrial past and levels of smoking. The presentation, entitled, are you getting the best available treatment?, outlined advances in the treatment of the disease. Richard explained how hospital and community staff work together to provide the very best care for people affected by chest disease which, more and more, is becoming far less hospital-based.

Richard also explained about how the trust was the centre for a specialised lung cancer staging technique which has made a huge difference to the lives of women affected by breast cancer.

"The technique requires a piece of specialist equipment to spin the fat cells to clean them and mix them with the patient’s naturally occurring regenerative cells. We have been fortunate enough to have a second machine donated by Cytori who are leading the world in this area. This means we can now offer this service at the University Hospital of North Tees as well as the University Hospital of Hartlepool. We are of only three centres in the UK to be offering this technique and the conference aims to share our learning with other surgeons who are interested in developing this in their own hospitals.

"We are now seeing other uses for this technique which involves using a patient’s own fat tissue and naturally occurring regenerative cells to correct or heal abnormalities.

"We are beginning to see the advantages of this therapy for women who have one breast which has not developed properly. The only option open to these women previously was an artificial breast implant, but these come with their own risks. How much better to be able to treat this condition, which can be very embarrassing and can lead to a serious loss of confidence and depression, with the woman’s own fat cells.

"We’re now using this technique to correct anal fistulas. Anal fistulas are channels which develop between the bowel and the skin around the anus. They are particularly difficult to treat and can be very distressing for the patient because they cause a particular type of incontinence.

"So far we have treated five patients with a combination of the traditional surgery we normally use and cell enriched reconstruction. Four out of five have been successful so this is looking very promising for patients with this debilitating problem:"

Cell enriched breast reconstruction conference attracts delegates from across the country

A conference to highlight the benefits of fat grafting (lipofilling) was held at the University Hospital of North Tees.

A team at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, led by consultant surgeons Pud Bhaskar and Colm Hennessy, has been pioneering the technique for breast reconstruction which has made a huge difference to the lives of women affected by breast cancer.

Pud Bhaskar said: “We were delighted to welcome surgeons from right across the country to share what we have learned about this technique. It is helping many women who have had a partial mastectomy or lumpectomy following a diagnosis of breast cancer.

"The technique requires a piece of specialist equipment to spin the fat cells to clean them and mix them with the patient’s naturally occurring regenerative cells. We have been fortunate enough to have a second machine donated by Cytori who are leading the world in this area.

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Council of governors meeting

The governors are the voice of our members who help shape the future of the hospitals. Members and the general public are welcome to observe the meetings which are held around four times a year. Please contact the membership office for more information.

Board of directors meetings

The board of directors meet around six times a year. Members of the public and staff are welcome to observe the meetings. This is your chance to see how the board operates and gain first hand knowledge on the trust’s latest developments.

Spaces to attend the meetings are limited so please contact the membership office in advance to ensure your place. The next board of directors meeting is on Thursday, 26 January at 1pm in the boardroom, University Hospital of North Tees.

Member events

Members and people who are interested in becoming a member are invited to the next event on Saturday, 14 April at 9.30am, in the teaching centre, at the University Hospital of North Tees. Topics are to be confirmed. The event is free, but you need to book a place. People can do this by contacting the membership office.

Your trust needs you!

We want to increase our membership so that we are truly representative of the community we serve and that more people can become involved with their local hospital. Please encourage your family and friends to join the trust as a member. We would especially like to hear from anyone aged 16-25 years old as we have a number of potential opportunities they could be involved with. You can join by contacting us on membership@nth.nhs.uk, calling 01642 624060 or applying at www.nth.nhs.uk.

Member’s noticeboard

Contacting your membership office

You can get in touch with your membership office at 01642 624060 or membership@nth.nhs.uk.

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