

anthem



≡ We are 25! ≡
**NORTH TEES +
HARTLEPOOL
TOGETHER**

Also in this issue:

- 100 Leaders Cohort Two gets underway
- Trust charity celebrates 25 years of making a difference
- New tobacco dependency service launched
- And much, much more.

Keeping it in the family!

Find out how Chris Kemp and her three daughters make working at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust a family affair on page 6

Emergency unit calls on nurses to join team – as part of new recruitment drive

Nurses in the emergency assessment unit (EAU) at the University Hospital of North Tees have been leading an exciting recruitment campaign.

The unit cares for patients who need immediate review and who are expected to need further treatment on a medical ward.

Lisa Kelly, who has been ward matron for two years, said: "EAU is a fantastic unit to lead and to work in.

"Patients are at the very centre of everything we do and I am proud to work here."

Bethany Emers has been working on the unit since qualifying to be a nurse.

She said: "Caring for patients and working with the team in the unit has been a fantastic experience.

"The pace of the work is very fast and rewarding – we are treating different patients every day and making a real difference."

Sarah Plews, who has also worked on the ward since qualifying six months ago, said: "The unit has made me the sort of

nurse who is able to adapt quickly to different situations.

"It's also been a place where I am learning so much every day about so many different aspects of nursing."

Adam Breen is an emergency nurse practitioner on the unit – his first nursing role after a career change from his previous work as a sales-man.

He said: "By the very nature of this being an assessment unit, every patient has a different need, no patient is ever the same."

Julie Jenkins has worked on the unit for more than 20 years, having started as a healthcare assistant.

She said: "I have always felt able to ask the team for help and they have certainly helped me develop and to grow as a healthcare professional."



Hartlepool chemotherapy ward receive generous donation

A local friendly society has donated a cheque for £500 to a chemotherapy day unit, as part of their annual charitable giving to worthy causes within the community.

Members from the Cleveland and Durham Branch of Oddfellows Society attended the University Hospital of Hartlepool to share their donation with the chemotherapy team.

Oddfellows society is a non-profit organisation which helps its members to forge lifelong friendships and offers them support in times of need – they also hold member events to raise funds for charitable ventures, to help with improvements in their local community.

Provincial Grand Master Ian Snowdon said: "We sit down annually to decide which charities we want to donate to in the area and the chemotherapy ward at Hartlepool was suggested by one of our members.

"We all agreed it was a worthy cause and that it was important to be able to support our local hospital. We look forward to seeing how local patients will benefit from the donation."

Chemotherapy nurse Rosie Livingston, who accepted the donation said: "We're really grateful to Oddfellows for their generous donation to our team.

It is always very humbling to see just how generous people within our community can be.

"The money will go towards ensuring our patients get the very best care when they are with us."



Provincial Grand master Ian Snowdon and Secretary David Smith donate £500 to Rosie and her team at Hartlepool chemotherapy day unit.



Chief Executive Julie Gillon

"Staff are our eyes and ears – we must always listen and learn"

"You feel trusted to care for our patients and feel safe in raising concerns – but we can always do more."

The results of the annual NHS Staff Survey have been published – and the Trust has reflected on the feedback and themes raised.

The highest ever number of staff across the NHS completed this year's NHS Staff Survey.

Regionally, the Trust had the second highest response rate – with 92% of staff feeling they are trusted to do their job and 78% feeling safe in raising concerns about clinical practice.

The Trust is also equal to or higher than the national comparator in all areas of the survey – which this year followed the NHS People Promise to track progress against NHS England's ambition to make the health service better.

Julie Gillon, chief executive, said: "As we all know, the last two years have been incredibly challenging.

"Many staff have worked in different roles and under unprecedented demands in their lives, both in and out of the workplace. None of us are immune to this – it has impacted us all.

"In light of this, I am proud of the job we have all performed – right across the organisation – always putting patients first in the most trying of times."

Other stand out figures for the Trust included:

- Staff rated us 7.4 out of 10 for our compassion and inclusivity
- Staff rated us 6.9 out of 10 for staff engagement
- We each have a voice that counts' – 6.9 out of 10
- 'We are a team' – 6.7 out of 10

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Doctor takes on new role as Clinical Director for endoscopy training across the North East

Dr Chris Wells, consultant gastroenterologist is taking on the role to oversee endoscopy training in the North East as part of a new organisation.

The Northern Endoscopy Training Academy (NETA) will ensure that endoscopies continue to be delivered safely as the North East welcomes new waves of doctors and nurses.

Endoscopies are a key service for diagnosing gastrointestinal (digestive system) cancer and even for cancer prevention by identifying polyps – growths of tissue which may turn cancerous over time.

Set to launch in September 2022, the academy has been in development for two years as Chris collaborated with other endoscopy trainers in the region to advance its conceptualisation. It will support and deliver high quality, coordinated training for all trainee endoscopists across the North East and North Cumbria.

Now Chris has been appointed as the Clinical Director for the academy.

He said: "I'm very excited about this role and the academy.

"Performing endoscopy is a key skill for consultants in surgery and gastroenterology. We're preparing trainees their preparation for their future in endoscopy – something that's so important in diagnosing cancer.

"At North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, we always get really good feedback from our trainees – now we can ensure that doctors across the North East are receiving an effective, competent and a more collaborative training programme."

"we always get really good feedback from our trainees"



Dr. Chris Wells

As well as the clinical director, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust will also host the manager and administrator for NETA. Together the team will maintain the Trust's high profile in endoscopy training and augment its already high reputation amongst regional trainees.



The North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust breast care team

Breast team beats COVID backlog

Our breast care team is crediting the commitment of staff and the bravery of patients for clearing the backlog of breast cancer scanning appointments created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Trust's scanning service covers Stockton and Hartlepool, North Yorkshire, Redcar and Cleveland and County Durham.

The team scans patients in their top-of-the-line mobile scanning unit and can spend several months in one area as they carry out scans for eligible women, who all receive a letter inviting them for an appointment.

Usually scanning some 5,000 women per month, the service's temporary COVID-19 forced closure resulted in a significant backlog of more than 15,000 women.

Amanda Firby, breast screening and symptomatic services manager, said: "I knew our staff would do everything they could to get our service back on track, but I'm amazed at how effective they have been.

"They've worked incredibly hard to create a new booking system and found ways to make sure our scanning unit is COVID-safe and our patients don't spend any more time there than needed.

"The staff also worked a lot of extra hours and at weekends which we all really appreciate.

"It's also a credit to our patients who were brave and confident enough to come for their scans. Hats off to all the women who understood the importance of their breast scan and put their confidence in us to carry out their scan as safely as possible."

Cancer research nurse shares story of bowel cancer diagnosis after seeing no symptoms

After clinical research nurse Barbara Campbell spent a decade working with bowel cancer patients, the last thing she expected was to be a patient herself.

Since 2011, 63-year-old Barbara, from Stockton-on-Tees, has worked at the University Hospital of North Tees to encourage people to complete their bowel screening tests and deliver results and diagnoses. Having previously worked in the bowel screening department, she now works as a clinical research nurse in identifying early signs of cancer.

In February 2021, Barbara received the news that she had stage 3 bowel cancer which would require surgery and chemotherapy at her local hospital where she also works.

Her diagnosis came after she completed a routine bowel screening kit, despite having no symptoms or signs of cancer.

Barbara said: "I was invited for a colonoscopy at North Tees and I wasn't particularly worried.

"I expected to get a bit of a lecture about eating my five a day, cutting down on drinking and taking better care of myself.

"Instead they found quite a large cancer."

Bowel cancer is the second biggest cancer killer in England but it is treatable and curable, especially if diagnosed early.

On 16 March last year, Barbara underwent surgery to remove the large tumour and a portion of her bowel. This was followed by six months of oral chemotherapy treatment in three week cycles.

Right from diagnosis, she felt well supported by her daughter Shaunagh, son Robin, her partner Steve, friends and her colleagues at the hospital.

Barbara continued: "I felt a real outpouring of love – I had so many cards, gifts, food and kind wishes. It's strange to be told how much you're loved when it's such a worrying time."



Barbara & Degsy

Friendship and laughter the best medicine for Wednesday Wonder Women

A group of women who all bonded while battling cancer in the same hospital unit have celebrated the final treatment of one of their group's members.

The self-titled 'Wednesday Wonder Women' saw Amanda Rees, from Norton – get to toll the final treatment bell in March at the University Hospital of North Tees.

The group was formed within the chemotherapy ward, after the seven members all found themselves diagnosed with breast cancer in the autumn of 2021.

Group member Dee Hall, from Billingham, explained: "Wednesday is breast treatment day in the chemotherapy ward and there was this natural drawing together of a group of us who all would sit for treatment.

"Jean Hurren and Bridget Caygill were the first two to meet, then myself, Amanda, Barbara Warin, Janice Allen and Alicia Hodgson all followed.

Jean said: "I remember that first week, I was alone. It was a terrifying prospect stepping into the unknown and having nobody else around me – then Bridget came and we got chatting. The Wednesday Wonder Women started there."

Alicia added: "Some of the treatments can feel really isolating, so our group forming was a blessing. We found a safe space – somewhere to compare notes and experiences – with others who really understood what we were going through."

Shared treatment experiences

The group have supported one another throughout their breast cancer treatment, through highs and lows, and frustrating treatment pauses when a member hasn't been well enough for treatment one week.

Amanda said: "We have become each others' safety nets and I've found some friends for life. We've also, jokingly, been told off for being too loud a few times – I never thought I would be told to stop laughing in a chemo unit – It's amazing really.

Dee added: "The staff have been incredible. They naturally just know when you need that extra support, or what to say to encourage you to push on. They can tell when something is off and are our psychological support line.

"We have complete trust in the nurses, and know they are doing the best for us all to make sure we can all get through our treatment together."

Barbara added: "Strangely enough, I look forward to my Wednesdays – to know I'm well enough to come to my next session and that I can see my friends and the staff. We're pushing each other to get better."

First of the group to 'graduate'

Amanda, shared her thoughts as she rang the final treatment bell: "It's strange to think I won't have to come here every week for my next treatment.

"I know it will take a while to get back to normality – but I couldn't have asked for a greater support network – my wonder women and the staff have become an extended family.

"In the meantime, we will be pushing each other through our treatments and encouraging one another in our recovery – then all going out to properly celebrate together!"



The Wednesday Wonder Women (L-R): Alicia, Janice, Dee, Jean, Barbara and Amanda with staff from the chemotherapy day unit



Amanda rings the treatment bell – signalling the end of her chemo treatment

Maternity team buoyant after award nomination

Our brilliant Rowan Team are looking to the future after being nominated for a 2022 Parliamentary Award.

Although the Nursing and Midwifery award was claimed by Admiral Nurses team at Great Western Hospital, the team was thrilled to receive the national recognition.

Anita Scott, lead midwife for continuity of carer, said: "Congratulations to Great Western Hospital.

"Of course we're disappointed but maternity and nursing is a family and we are really pleased for the winners.

"As far as we're concerned every baby we deliver is a special prize all on their own and we're more determined than ever to offer only the very best service."

Launched in 2018, the NHS Parliamentary Awards recognises the best in health care across a number of categories.

The University Hospital of Hartlepool's Rowan Suite includes a water pool, active birthing room and individual rooms with a home from home feel. It has welcomed more than 50 babies since opening in 2021.



The Rowan Team

Meet the family of nurses who all work together at the same hospital

When Chris Kemp began her career working as a nurse in 1975, she never dreamed she would eventually be working alongside her family

More than 45 years later, she is closer than ever with her three daughters – both at home and the hospital she works in.

Chris, 63, is a ward matron at the University Hospital of North Tees where she has spent the last 13 years of her long nursing career.

And her daughters have all followed in her footsteps, taking up positions in nursing and the allied health profession at the same hospital.

Chris works alongside daughters 33-year-old bariatric specialist nurse Nicole Thomas, 27-year-old ward matron Alex Higgins and 24-year-old occupational therapist Victoria Kemp.

Chris began her career as a cadet nurse in 1975, before earning her qualifications and taking up the role of staff nurse in 1980 – earning £4,198 a year. She was promoted to sister aged just 23 and has continuously progressed since then.

Now a ward matron, she said: "I didn't even research or look into being a nurse or anything. I was just naturally very drawn to it.

"I'm ward matron now but I still like to get stuck in. The majority of our patients are so lovely and it just makes you feel good and so proud of your team."

Chris isn't the only one in the family naturally drawn to a career in health and care. Her three daughters all found that they 'naturally fell into' their roles as well.

Middle daughter and surgical observations unit matron Alex said: "I originally wanted to be a social worker so I came into nursing to get experience in a care environment. By the time the third year of my degree came around, I just couldn't imagine doing anything else.

"I love that it's something different every day – you're always on your toes and never bored.

"In surgery, we take some of the poorest patients who've been through intensive care. You see them at their very worst and then suddenly they're up and going home a couple of weeks later.

"There's nothing more rewarding."

Oldest daughter Nicole qualified around ten years ago and now specialises in bariatric surgery nursing – also known as weight loss surgery. While youngest daughter Victoria is in a slightly different role – she has worked as a qualified occupational therapist since 2020, working closely with diabetes, cardiology and haematology patients.

But 2022 marks the last year that the four will work together as mum Chris is set to retire later in the year, looking to spend more time with her grandchildren and at her apartment in Majorca.

However, the four are proud to be a close-knit family, outside of work as well as in. At work, the family meet up for coffees whenever their breaks coincide. At home, the four regularly get together.

Kemp Family – Left to right: Mum Chris Kemp and daughters Victoria Kemp, Alex Higgins and Nicole Thomas



Helping staff stay at the forefront of modern healthcare – the value of a special library service

Over the last few years, the knowledge and information service has innovated and evolved – and continues to do so today.

The service, based at the University Hospital of North Tees, started as a department for accessing books from.

Since then, the offer has expanded – it is a place where resources can be accessed from across the world.

It is helping staff across the organisation to develop and to grow so that we continue to provide first class care to our population.

Dolon Basu, the Trust's director of medical education, said: "This knowledge and information service is a high quality facility run by a fantastic team.

"It is accessed extensively by staff from across the organisation – offering expert resources 24 hours a day from across the world.

"It is also a place of study – staff have access to computers, iPads and a self service system.

"The service gets excellent feedback, surveys are always very positive.

"There are also exciting plans to launch a similar service at our other hospital site in Hartlepool.

"We are very proud of the team and the service."

Various staff showcased the service as part of NHS Knowledge and Library Services National Awareness Week recently.

This included staff such as foundation year two doctor Irvin Yeoh. He is the library's BMJ Best Practice Champion – promoting the service as a vital point of care tool.

He said: "The knowledge and information service is an amazing service and has plenty of resources that are both relevant and useful for clinical staff for learning and continuing professional development and medical education."

“ We are very proud of the team and the service ”



Dolon Basu, the Trust's director of medical education (pictured centre with librarian Debbie Elliott and library officer Carl Higgins)

Foundation year two Doctor Irvin Yeoh

Midwife named among top research leads - in role traditionally performed by doctors

A research midwife has been recognised for the role she has played leading research studies - as she celebrates a new landmark achievement.

Research midwife Sharon Gowans, is one of our principal investigators (PI) for research studies.

She has become the Trust's first ever PI who is a non-medical to be placed in the research network's top five highest recruiters.

The role of a PI is traditionally carried out by a doctor – but is now something being performed by other highly qualified and experienced health professionals.

Sharon said: "It is a privilege to be able to lead research trials in the organisation.

"Research studies help find new treatments and save lives – something which has never been more apparent than over the course of the pandemic.

"The only reason why every PI here and their teams are able to recruit so many participants to studies is due to our staff and patients.

"Our staff are so engaged with research. They understand the importance of it and they take that time to speak to their patients about being involved in trials."



Research midwife Sharon Gowans



Amy Hunter - Advanced ultrasound practitioner

Improving patients' ultrasound experience

Amy Hunter, an advanced practitioner in ultrasound at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, has led an improvement project for women with early pregnancy complications as part of the 100 leaders programme.

Her group's change project focused on improving the experience of women in a challenging stage of their pregnancy who may feel anxious coming to their appointment.

Amy said: "Ladies who experience abnormal early pregnancy symptoms in their first trimester, and who have also had previous early pregnancy complications, share waiting areas with heavily pregnant ladies and are scanned in the same rooms.

"The locations of these services lack sensitivity and compassion and can heighten the anxiety levels of these women.

"They also have to make a journey through the hospital to get to the early pregnancy assessment clinic nurses.

"The aim of our project was to stop the co-location of these services, enabling all of the scans and diagnoses to take place in one area."

Amy, who has wanted to change the process for some time, was given the opportunity to do so after enrolling in the Trust's 100 Leaders programme.

She explained: "With the help of the project, we put an early pregnancy specialist nurse on an ultrasound training course. She is now in the process of completing her certification.

"This nurse will carry out the triage, scan, diagnosis, review and counselling of ladies.

"It is the hope - with the support and passion of everyone in the team - that we will get further nurses on the course.

"It's never been a short term project but 100 leaders got us off the starting blocks.

"It has empowered me to look at changes and given me confidence to act on these changes.

"Without the support of this initiative - I would never have felt empowered to make changes to improve care for pregnant women."

Derek's sporting life

We are proud to be an Active Hospital, encouraging patients and staff to improve their health by moving more.

Leading by example is Professor Derek Bell, joint chair of both North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Derek, a professor of acute medicine, took up hockey at the age of 13, and now at the age of 67 is a proud member of the Scottish masters hockey team.

Playing in midfield and defence, Derek has previously played for Scottish schools, Scottish under 21s and Scottish and British universities, in both domestic and European competitions.

Derek's commitment to his sport sees him still playing for his local Edinburgh team most Saturdays and a monthly masters training session, the team with which he has won a bronze medal in the Australia-hosted world masters cup, the home nation's cup and this year lifted the Celtic cup against stiff competition from Ireland and Wales.

Derek said: "On an average week, I'll run three or four times and a couple of cycle rides, plus my hockey training.

"I exercise to keep fit and control my weight, although to be honest, controlling what you eat is the most effective method of weight management.

"It's also a great de-stressor. When you run or cycle, you tend to think clearer and it can have a huge positive impact on mental health.

"The best advice I can give to someone looking to take up more exercise is to not overdo it. It is crucial not to do too much too quickly. A brisk walk for five minutes and then a rest is a perfectly acceptable starting point."

Derek is now focusing his efforts on taking part in this year's world masters competition in Tokyo, which has been delayed for two years due to the pandemic.



Professor Derek Bell in his hockey gear with a stick gifted to him by medical colleagues from Pakistan, a major hockey playing nation and manufacturer of high tech carbon hockey sticks.

Success of new hospital support workers leads to permanent recruitment plan

The "overwhelming success" of new support worker roles for busy hospital wards has led to a health trust's decision to continue to recruit for the position.

The team support worker roles provide extra support for clinical teams and support for patients in hospital.

The entry-level positions are also a chance for people to make a first step into healthcare within the NHS.

The roles, first set up 18 months ago, are six-month fixed-term contracts - during which time the Trust develops and supports the team support workers to gain full time clinical and non-clinical positions.

Karen Sheard, deputy chief nurse, said: "During the pandemic we asked the ward areas what we could do to help them."

"The responses were similar - they asked for help with general patient and non-patient related tasks they found challenging because they were too busy caring for patients.

"Tasks such as answering the phones, keeping the area clean, stocking up and keeping patients company and assisting with patient hygiene needs.

"We also wanted to reach out to the local community and to offer people a stepping stone in to the NHS. People that may not have had the confidence or the qualifications to do so previously.

"We wanted to support population health and the local health economy by offering this opportunity.

"So we created the idea of a team support worker - someone to support clinical areas with a range of tasks."

The first cohort received over one hundred applicants - from which the Trust appointed 45 people.

At the end of the six months, all but seven members of this group went on to gain full time employment at the organisation in a variety of roles.

Since then, a second cohort has joined - with the Trust now planning to recruit approximately 20 positions twice a year.

Karen added: "The roles have been an overwhelming success.

"We have received amazing feedback from staff on the wards - that they are invaluable, dedicated and improve patient care. In addition to this we have received positive feedback from patients.

"The pandemic gave me the motivation to make that change"

"We are absolutely delighted with the programme's success so far and look forward to developing it further to support patients and staff"

Anastasia Campbell and Elaine Wilson have been involved in the team support worker process.

Anastasia has completed her team support worker placement and is now studying to be a healthcare assistant while working in the orthopaedic ward at the University Hospital of North Tees.

The mother-of-three, aged 46, who has previously worked in hospitality as a pub manager, said: "It's something I have always wanted to do - to work in healthcare.

"The pandemic gave me the motivation to make that change. I am so pleased I did it - I love it here."

Elaine has had a different entry into the team support worker role - she has previously worked at North Tees as a healthcare assistant but due to health reasons she can no longer perform this role.

She said: "I didn't want to leave healthcare completely - when the Trust explained this new role to me I thought it was the perfect opportunity for me to remain in patient care."



Anastasia Campbell



Elaine Wilson

New investment means patients will be in and out of hospital the same day

A new initiative to help diagnose issues with people suffering from internal bleeding from their bottom is set to help people in Teesside – after we launched a new service.

The Trust has started a new one-stop outpatient clinic to immediately assess, investigate and treat people suffering from bleeding to their rectum.

This is after the Trust invested in a state-of-the-art handheld digital endoscope, which takes images and video of the rectum to diagnose the reason behind any bleeding.

The LumenEye means many patient examinations will be as outpatient procedures – with video immediately available for colorectal specialists for diagnosis and treatment planning.

The clinics at the University Hospital of North Tees are being led by consultant surgeons Nicola Maguire and Abdalla Mustafa.

Mr Mustafa said: "This technology means we can run a one-stop clinic where assessment, investigation and possible treatment can be performed at the same setting.

"We can visualise the rectum in an outpatient setting without the need for an endoscopy appointment.

"If any cancer is seen, tissue samples can be taken to expedite diagnosis and patient journey to treatment."

The system was invented during the pandemic as a way of reducing the need for patients to have to spend unnecessary extra time in hospital.

The images and videos of the rectum it provides can be seen by specialists remotely and means patients can leave hospital the same day as an outpatient.

Mrs Maguire said: "This new system will allow us to change the way we care for our patients – and shorten the time it takes to make a diagnosis and reduce any worries patients may have.

"It allows us to perform a digital examination while standing straight and talking to the patient.

"We are excited to have it here at the organisation, we are sure that our population across the Tees Valley will benefit from it.

"We look forward to expanding the service further over the coming months and helping more and more of our patients."



Consultant surgeons Nicola Maguire and Abdalla Mustafa

New leadership team to head-up people directorate

The Trust welcomed two new members who will lead its People directorate.

In May, Dr Susy Cook and Graeme Raffell started their roles as the new interim chief people officer and interim deputy chief people officer.

Dr Cook, who as interim chief people officer is leading on issues such as staff health and wellbeing, wrote to the workforce,

saying: "Our roles are to take a lead in ensuring we are supporting you to allow you to provide outstanding care to our population.

"We want to help you all work in a culture where we are encouraged to learn, to act with compassion, to treat people fairly and ensure these practices and behaviours are followed and understood at all levels in the organisation no matter what role you have.

"The people service is driven by transformational and innovative change, with a focus on a more holistic people centric approach. This is all aimed at ensuring you – our people – have the best possible experience at work. This is supported through our people plan and people promise at national and local level."

Over the next few weeks and months they will meet with staff and teams through events, forums and discussions.



Interim chief people officer Susy Cook

NHS trainer who has boosted the skills of thousands of health staff nationally

A trainer who has delivered support to more than 10,000 healthcare staff across the country is showcasing one of his most high profile courses.

John Blenkinsopp, clinical effectiveness advisor, has been leading national training for dozens of organisations over the last 20 years.

John, who has worked in the health sector for three decades, regularly runs introductory critical appraisal training – something all healthcare professionals need to have.

The virtual sessions cover the importance of critical appraisal, the tools to use, the range of products needed and the steps involved in appraising a randomised controlled trial.

They also help people understand the steps involved in appraising a diagnostic test and show healthcare staff how these can be used in the workplace.

John said: "I am based in Teesside – but what many people may not realise is we train and support healthcare staff from across the country.

"Since 1998, I have been running critical appraisal training for more than 30 health trusts as well as other organisations such as the British Medical Association, Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Kings Fund and British Medical Journal.

"And I am proud to run this course under the banner of North Tees and Hartlepool – collaborating with national partners."

The one-day workshop gives an intensive overview of the skills needed and resources available for critical appraisal and how these can be used in the workplace.

The session includes a mixture of teaching, workshops and discussion around post course support and future plans.

John added: "I also run other courses in critical appraisal on demand – advanced courses, facilitating courses, revision courses and so on.



Clinical effectiveness advisor John Blenkinsopp

"Not only that, I also do subject specific courses – I recently ran critical appraisal for GPs and for elderly care staff in Newcastle and I'll be doing critical appraisal in paediatrics and in physiotherapy.

"The list is endless and it works across every clinical specialty."

The next introductory courses, which are held virtually over Microsoft Teams, are due to be held on 13 September and 15 November.

To find out more and to book, contact nth-tr.ceu@nhs.net



The tobacco dependency team. L-R: Tina Weatherill, Julie Bardsley, Ruth Boston, Natalie Brooks

New service launches for independence from tobacco addiction

We're stepping up to help patients stub it out as our new tobacco dependency service hits the wards.

All patients admitted to the emergency assessment unit who smoke will be offered bespoke support to manage their cravings while under the Trust's care.

In conjunction with the ward's medical staff, trained tobacco dependency team members will prescribe nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and provide support with practical tips to beat the need for nicotine.

However, the tobacco dependency team support does not end there. On discharge, the patient will be provided with two-weeks' worth of NRT and, if they agree, a referral to a local community organisation who can provide ongoing support.

Julie Bardsley, tobacco dependency specialist lead, said: "Smoking is a disease, not a lifestyle choice.

"There are too many smokers in Stockton and Hartlepool and we want to help them. Smoking does not contribute anything positive towards anyone's health.

"We are ready to get onto the ward and help our patients in every way possible."

The average rate of smoking in the UK is 14% of the population but in Stockton-on-Tees it is 16% and in Hartlepool it is 18%. Being so far above the national average is a major contributor to health inequalities in the region.

Patient views!



Here are just a small sample of some of the lovely comments our patients have made about our staff and services online!

Pauline Jiggins
Absolutely amazing 🥰
Well Done North tees and hartlepool NHS Trust!!
Leading the way in the North East xxxx
Like Reply Hide 2w

Amy Badger
These people are amazing when my mam passed 2 days before her 60th birthday they let us come and sit in a gorgeous room for as long as we needed (not that we wanted to be there) but in the circumstances we as a family can't thank these lovely people enough. They made her look so peaceful xXx
Like Reply Hide 5w

rdesilva1984
Absolutely gorgeous ladies inside and out, proud to have you as part of our team and lucky to work with you 🙌
Like Reply Hide 2w

Claire Powell
Paolo is amazing he looked after my Dad, fantastic guy.
Like Reply Hide 2w

Katie Aspin
Alan does a fantastic job. He supported me when I found out one of my loved ones had cancer. He answered all the questions that I couldn't wrap my head around. Same goes for the lovely Denise ❤️
Like Reply Hide 1w Edited

Alison Mccullagh
Absolutely fabulous team in Endoscopy 🙌🙌
Like Reply Hide 3w

Paul Wharton
This is a brilliant service organised and delivered by brilliant people for the benefit of some of the most vulnerable in our communities. My thanks to everyone involved in this, from the early development stage to what it is today. 🙌🙌🙌
Like Reply Hide Send Message 6d

Rebecca Allison
Well Done John, when I used to work with you, you were an obvious expert in your field but more so a pleasure to work with. 🙌
Like Reply Hide Send Message 4d

Don Castelow
A BIG thank you team, on the receiving end of your, help, understanding, knowledge and care.
THANK YOU

Linda Hepplestone
This team looked after my husband when he had his strokes wonderful people x
Like Reply Hide 1w

Elsbeth Rowntree
North Tees has a fantastic dedicated respiratory team 🙌
Like Reply Hide 2w

Katie Aspin
Alan does a fantastic job. He supported me when I found out one of my loved ones had cancer. He answered all the questions that I couldn't wrap my head around. Same goes for the lovely Denise ❤️
Like Reply Hide 1w Edited

Amy Badger
Aawww Julie looked after me think when I had my last baby I had gestational diabetes and they were amazing with me x
Like Reply Hide 1w

Abby Vince
Just want to use this to say thank you to the nurses on Ward 26 when I was in hospital for 10 days back in March, they were all absolutely incredible even though they were so busy and sometimes really short staffed. They never ever made me feel like I was a burden or a pest or asking too much. Same goes for the HCAs as well! Made a really awful experience so much easier ❤️
Like Reply Hide 4w

Rebecca Allison
Well Done John, when I used to work with you, you were an obvious expert in your field but more so a pleasure to work with. 🙌
Like Reply Hide Send Message 1d

Maddy Madigan
Phenomenal nurse, the few shifts I have worked with Sonja were inspirational!
Like Reply Hide 4w

Vea Glynn
Warm friendly and welcoming nurse.. always a cheery hi and friendly smile.. 😊 xxx
Like Reply Hide 3w

Leigh Dave Richardson
Amazing staff who helped my Dad so much after his stroke last April. He was on the ward for a long time and with covid restrictions unable to have visitors, and I was unable to get home from Australia. Every time I called they were so lovely. Huge thank you to you all 🙌
Like Reply Hide 3w

Lisa Auckland
I've had the pleasure of being cared for by you Adam and you were brilliant. So good at your job with a little bit of humour thrown in, which was exactly what I needed 🙌
Like Reply Hide 4w

David Emerton
Thank you for all your support for patients and staff over many years. You are appreciated.
Like Reply Hide 2w

Odet Mark Aszkenasy
Super to work with, as are all the amazing staff in Children's outpatients at North Tees.
Like Reply Hide 4w

Carley Ogden
Truly a compassionate leader, a role model for all staff to look upto x
Like Reply Hide 4w

We'd love to hear your comments on our services and hospitals as we strive to continually improve the services we provide.

You can share feedback and let us know about things we are doing well or give suggestions for improvements through our patient experience team by emailing: nth-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net or contacting the team on: 01642 624719.

Alternatively, join us online at:

- [NorthTeesHpoolNHS](#)
- [@NTeesHpoolNHSFT](#)
- [northteesandhartlepoolnhsft](#)
- [@nteeshpoolnhsft](#)

Game, set and match!



Game, set and match!

Eight lucky colleagues were chosen at random to enjoy a day at the Wimbledon tennis tournament courtesy of NHS E/I.

ICT telecoms analyst **Christophe Corso** told us: "We arrived at court 2 just before the first match of the day which was the ladies' singles where the French player **Caroline Garcia** played against **Marie Bouzková** from the Czech Republic. It was a great match even though **Caroline** lost 7-5, 6-2.

"We then went for lunch, we could not resist having a nice refreshing Pimm's with the famous Wimbledon strawberries and cream.

"We had a fantastic day in Wimbledon, a unique experience that we have been able to enjoy."

Cardiac Specialist Nurse **Grace Keenan** said: "We took a work colleague each as well so kept it in the department.

"We had a fabulous time and got to see the Goffin v Tiafore game which was neck and neck till the very end."

MTI doctor in anaesthetics and critical care **Mansi Vaidya** said: "It was the most wonderful opportunity to watch Wimbledon from the court thanks to the tickets given to NHS workers! Truly was one of the most surreal experiences me and my husband had, watching tennis live and it definitely went in our list of top 10 favourite things done to date!"

Melloney Threlkeld, lead cardiac specialist nurse, commented: "The whole experience at Wimbledon was amazing including the Pimm's and strawberries. We were able to wander around the grounds which were immaculate and covered in flowers. We were in court 2 and were lucky enough to see a ladies' match followed by a men's match, which went to five sets and was nail-biting to the end."



100 Leaders

100 leaders cohort 1 networking service is rolled out Trust wide

A 100 leaders cohort 1 project, the networking service, has been rolled out to all staff members of the Trust.

The project connects staff through the power of informal conversations, aiming to influence culture in the organisation.

Kath Tarn, senior clinical professional, led the project and said: "The networking service provides an opportunity for a conversation with someone who can make a difference to your day, your week or your career."

Different to a mentor relationship, the networking service is a low commitment one off conversation that gives Trust staff the opportunity to widen their professional relationships through human connection.

The service comprises of two roles: a champion and delegate, both of which the Trust are currently recruiting for.

Champions are Trust staff who have worked in their jobs longer than six months and are willing to help other colleagues with their professional development; delegates directly contact them in order to share their expertise on their role or department.

Delegates are individuals who are looking to expand their knowledge on a particular skill or role. This can include recruitment opportunities, training or job shadowing.

Chris Tarn, strategic workforce lead, took part in the networking service as a champion meeting up with senior occupational therapist, Lauren Bettinson.

Chris said: "Being part of the networking service was a rewarding experience."

"In an hour, I learnt about other areas of the Trust, made a new connection and grew my network."

"It is an opportunity to speak to people, to learn from them and make that personal connection to pass on your personal experience. It helps us to break down barriers."

The networking service is open to any Trust staff member. To sign up please email your expression of interest to nth-tr.employeeengagement@nhs.net



Chris Tarn and Lauren Bettinson - 100 Leaders Networking Service



Kath Tarn Pack - 100 Leaders Networking Service

Made a new connection and grew my network

100 Leaders Cohort 2

Meet the 100 Leaders Cohort 2 who are already at work delivering real and lasting change to our Trust.

Pack 1 – Connecting to community colleagues (Mark Malik and Lynsey Honeyman)

Our aim is to improve the health and wellbeing of our community based colleagues. We aim to achieve this by improving the staff room and facilities available for our colleagues based in the community. This is so staff can enjoy break times away from their desks and improve their access to facilities (including restrooms) at council venues when away from their base location.

Our hope is that having open access to these facilities will have a positive impact on community-based staff.



Pack 2 – North Tees charity shop (Linda Robinson and Suzi Campbell)

Our project is to develop a charity shop, initially on the North Tees site, but with the vision of opening more in Hartlepool and the community. The purpose of the shop is to support our Trust charity, North Tees and Hartlepool Together, provide a cost effective shopping experience and support our patients in their rehabilitation journey by giving them a real life retail experience.

Pack 3 – Developing facilities on the Hartlepool site (Lee Bennett and Lucie Littlewood)

Our project is to develop the facilities on our Hartlepool site, improving both the restaurant and food facilities. We want to offer a more efficient service so break times are sufficient, whilst offering a more varied and healthier menu to help improve staff morale and wellbeing.

In addition, we are currently sourcing appropriate rooms and facilities to improve areas such as theatre efficiency, paediatric therapy services and meeting with patients and their families. We hope the combination of these will improve the patient experience and create a nicer work environment for the staff.



Pack 4 – Rejuvenation of existing greenspaces (James Gobie and Chris Ferguson)

Our project is to revamp the courtyard at Hartlepool hospital. We aim to provide a sheltered area for staff to sit and have lunch outside; this includes adding seating areas and other outdoor and garden supplies.

We also plan to provide the same treatment to the rainbow room at North Tees to maximise the potential of the space. It is the hope that our project will help improve staff morale by encouraging them to take their breaks outside, improving their wellbeing.



Pack 8 – Improved staff engagement (Lydney Hetherington and Ashleigh Nixon)

The aim of our project is to positively influence working culture by improving the feeling of staff autonomy, achieved through non-hierarchical engagement with the creation of a staff representative role.

The hope is that this will help reduce staff turnover, ensuring that we listen to their voices and allow everyone to feel heard.



Pack 5 – Enhance green space across Trust sites (Katie Coulson and Danielle Jamieson)

Our project is looking at how we can enhance some of the green spaces across both University Hospital of North Tees and University Hospital of Hartlepool. Our aim is to create a more positive environment for staff and patients in these areas. The project is inspired by the positive impact greenspace has on health and wellbeing as well as the positive environmental benefits, in keeping in with the Trust's Green Plan.



Pack 6 – Improving access and knowledge to wellbeing and exercise (Patrick Russell and Gordon Mitchell)

Our project focuses on staff welfare. We are looking to introduce an initiative that enables staff to make best use of existing wellbeing provisions that are already on offer whilst also educating them on wider options.

We want our staff to feel able to say: "I know where I can go, I know what I can do, and I know the Trust is providing this for me" as we look to maximise wellbeing levels across our workforce.



Pack 10 – Improving signage and wayfinding at the North Tees site (Tim Carter and Michelle Matchett)

Our project is to improve the patient and visitor experience by providing visible and user-friendly electronic signage outside and throughout the hospital site, directing patients and visitors more efficiently to their appointments.

Our aim is to elevate stress around being late, and maintain the smooth running of wards and departments.



Pack 7 – Changing facilities uplift (Tom McCourt and Kirsty Miller)

Our project aims to increase the wellbeing of our staff by revamping the central staff changing rooms located at North Tees and Hartlepool hospital.

The hope is that this will improve how staff begin and end their working day, indirectly leading to better staff performance and helping them to enjoy coming to work.



Your latest news from NTH Solutions




The opening of the Rainbow Staircase

Congratulations to retail team leader Nicola Critchley who cut the ribbon and officially opened the staircase to the rainbow garden at North Tees.

Nicola took part in the Trust's 100 Leaders programme and her team's project was to create an outdoor area for staff to take their breaks, joining it to the Tees Restaurant by a staircase to make it easier for staff to buy their lunch and visit the rainbow room for their breaks.

The garden is now fully kitted out with benches, flowers, water features and heaters. Divisional procurement support Stephen Shaw has been in contact with local companies who have kindly donated plants, hanging baskets, benches, ornaments and much more.

Stephen has also liaised with a company to have a special plaque made which is now on display at on the entrance to the staircase.

Celebrating the first National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day

We celebrated the first National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day this year. It was a day to be thankful and to recognise the vital role of our E&F workforce. We took time to reflect on the work done by these professionals and the value this gives to patients and staff.

Managing director of NTH Solutions Mike Worden said: "Alongside our clinical colleagues there is an equally dedicated, resilient and courageous estates workforce, without them our Trust would not be able to function."

"I have never been prouder to be part of this team and on behalf of the NTH Solutions senior management I would like to personally thank each and every one of you for your hard work and commitment to ensuring we support the Trust to provide the very best care to our patients."

Staff were provided with a selection of cakes kindly provided by Morgans Bakery and specially decorated with NTH Solutions logo colours, with smoothies and fruit kebabs provided by our chefs.



Tees Tastes and delivery service proving popular

Last year head chef team leader Richard Kirton wanted to implement a new range of meal kits for staff and patients, which can be purchased from the Tees Restaurant and cooked at home. After some research and planning, 'Tees Tastes at Home' was born.

Since it started the service has become very popular with staff, with many purchasing kits multiple times a week on a regular basis. The meal kits are freshly prepared each day, quick and easy to prepare, and provide staff with a delicious meal for two at an affordable price at the end of a busy workday.

Did you know the catering team also offer a free food and drink delivery service to staff workplaces. All staff have to do is contact the team on ext. 46310 and the delivery team will bring them their order promptly.

Porter Jeff talks about his career in the NHS

"I'd rather remember the good times than the bad, as they are what make you realise, yes, I'm making a difference to somebody's life."

These are the words of 60 year old porter Jeff Dixon, who has worked at our organisation for nearly 30 years. Jeff talks us through his career and the lessons he has learned along the way.

"Almost 29 years ago I walked through the front doors of North Tees General Hospital to start my career as a porter with the NHS."

"Accompanied only by the nerves that a new job brings, (we've all been there), I had no idea what I was letting myself in for. Over those years, I've had a lot of highs, and a lot of lows. Would I do it again if I knew then what I know now? The answer has three letters, not two. Yes, I would, because, quite simply, it's made me the person I am today!"

"The first, very harsh, lesson I learned about working in a hospital came not very long after I started. Taking a little old 92-year-old lady for an xray in a wheelchair, there I am, grumping and griping about what a bad day I was having, it's too hot to work, I'm fed up because I'm late for my break, you know the scenario."

"Said little old lady listened to me for about three minutes, then stopped me with a simple "Oi, son! You think you're having a bad day? Do you think I'm having a good one? You could be a lot worse off. It could be YOU in this wheelchair being pushed around. You've got to get to my age yet. Make the most of what you have, you only get one chance at it."

"That's one lesson I never forgot in a hurry!"

"Over the years, I've had some laughs, some happy times and some sad times. Too many to talk about, but it's all been worth it."



"The patient with Downs Syndrome who insisted myself and the lad I was working with at the time went to say hello every day, a colleague brought him a present one day, a small dinky type car. The look on his face, turning to tears of happiness. You'd think he'd just scored the winning goal in the cup final! And the day that he was discharged, he was NOT going anywhere until he said goodbye and thank you to myself and my mate. He had even drawn us a "goodbye and thank you" card on a piece of A4 paper given to him by one of the nurses."

"Those are the moments that make my job worthwhile, moments you can't buy."

"Taking the same child over and over again to theatre for operations on her hips. She'd never known anything apart from the way her condition had her. Always happy to see us. Greeted us with a cheeky smile and sometimes a "kid" joke. Lovely kid, and, yes, I do still, to this day, wonder how she fared in later life."

"The little girl who insisted we had "Trevor", her two foot tall cuddly dog as a porters mascot, about 20 years ago. Guess what? Trevor is still there in the x-ray porters room! I'd rather remember the good times than the bad, as they are what makes you realise, yes, I'm making a difference to somebody's life."

"Long live the NHS!"

Thanks to the Hartlepool estates team

The estates team at Hartlepool received thanks from management after they worked overtime during a bank holiday weekend to fix a problem with the water system.

The lads all volunteered to stay back to rectify the issue and stay until it was resolved, meaning there was as little disruption to the hospital and patients as possible.

The estates team works behind the scenes. From checking fire alarm systems to fixing leaks or electrical problems, the team is always on hand to ensure the hospital building is safe and secure for our staff to provide the best care to our patients.



Meet the volunteer improving an integral hospital service for deaf people across Teesside

A hospital volunteer is improving a crucial NHS service for deaf people across Teesside by leading on deaf awareness training for volunteers at our Trust.

67-year-old Val Tait, from Bishopsgarth, is training volunteers at the Trust – where she also volunteers – in communicating with deaf or hard of hearing people.

Val has had hearing loss since she was a child – a disability that runs in her family. As she got older, her hearing got progressively worse to the extent where she now cannot hear sounds below 80 decibels.

Following stage 3 breast cancer treatment, Val retired last year and has since volunteered her time in the very chemotherapy unit where she received treatment at the University Hospital of North Tees – where she now calls herself the 'Macmillan tea lady'.

Val said: "When I was applying to be a volunteer, I was worried that being deaf might impact my chances. But nobody minded at all – nobody batted an eyelid.

"Obviously nobody suggested that I spend all day answering phones. It's mostly just sitting down and talking and listening to the people undergoing chemotherapy and that can be so helpful.

"It's been fantastic so far – it's been a really positive thing for me to do."

Val is just shy of her first anniversary volunteering at the Trust and has now taken on leading a deaf awareness training session to support other volunteers – with the ultimate goal of enhancing patient experience.

The feedback from volunteers across the organisation has been wholly positive and the volunteers have taken Val's training on board – with one volunteer in the chemotherapy day unit making a chart with pictures of tea, sugar and milk for a deaf patient to communicate how she prefers her cups of tea.



Val Tait

Opening up a home to a mother and daughter from war-torn Ukraine – a hospital porter's generous offer

A hospital porter and his family from Middlesbrough – determined to help those suffering in war-torn Ukraine – have

opened up their home to a mother and daughter fleeing their homeland.

Paul Simms, who works for NTH Solutions, the subsidiary company of our Trust, and his wife Gill saw the devastating effect the war in Ukraine was having on innocent people – and knew immediately they wanted to help, so they began looking into how they could offer support.

They began by collecting items such as nappies, baby milk, and sanitary products and sent a large shipment of donations to Ukraine. Next they registered their interest in the 'Homes for Ukraine' government scheme and things moved pretty quickly

from there when they were put in contact with a mother and daughter seeking refuge.

Paul, who has worked at the Trust for 10 years, and Gill organised and paid for the transport to the UK themselves. Once they arrived, they welcomed Olga, 46, and her daughter Anastasia, 19, into their home.

Paul, who is also a registered dog trainer and behaviourist and has competed in Crufts, the annual dog show, said: "When people ask why we made this decision the answer is a simple one, to help those in need.

"Gill and I are so glad we made this decision, knowing you have positively impacted people's lives is wonderful, I would encourage anyone else considering joining the scheme to do so if you are able."

The Trust and NTH Solutions have already collectively raised a range of medical supplies for people in Ukraine as well as more than £12,000 to invest in more equipment.



Hospital porter Paul Simms

Local mum inspired to help other women breastfeed their babies

After giving birth two and half years ago, Sophie Simpson struggled to breastfeed her baby boy Arlo. Refusing to give up, Sophie asked her Trust maternity team for help with breastfeeding. A short but intensive period of advice and training followed, resulting in the new mum being able to feed her new arrival.

Sophie subsequently left her job with a bank and joined our trust as a midwifery assistant!

Sophie, 30, from Stockton-on-Tees, said: "I had Arlo at home and I just thought breastfeeding would come naturally, but it didn't. I couldn't get him to latch on or if he did, it was very painful for me.

"The midwifery team arranged for me to spend a couple of days at hospital where they gave me so much advice and support that I was able to properly feed Arlo.

"After that, I went to my local midwifery community hub which was a huge help, as were the regular visits from my own midwife to make sure I was still managing to feed Arlo.

"The best part of my job is helping a new family transition into parenthood. It's just so rewarding, but I don't want any new mum who is struggling to breastfeed to feel like a failure. We're always here to help."

The Trust operates regular breastfeeding support groups in the community and offers specialist, tailored help for all new mums under their care.



Sophie Simpson, midwifery assistant

Breastfeeding facts and tips:

- Mothers who breastfeed have a lower risk of developing breast cancer, ovarian cancer, heart disease, stroke, type-2 diabetes, and postpartum depression.
- Breast milk is a living substance that contains live cells, including stem cells, which go on to become other body cell types like brain, heart, kidney, or bone tissue.
- Breast milk contains antibodies and live white blood cells that help your baby fight against infection. And, if you or your baby are ill, the amount of these cells in your breast milk increases.
- Breastfeeding can be convenient - it's ready made to the right temperature, in the right portions wherever and whenever your baby needs it and its free.
- All breastmilk is amazing for your baby. By feeding responsively you can ensure your baby is getting the right amount for them.
- Your baby doesn't need formula before your milk comes in. Your body produces colostrum which is a concentrated thicker type of milk that's packed full of antibodies and antioxidants.
- The law states you can breastfeed in public anywhere, including restaurants and parks.

Patients thanked for making advanced training possible

16 local patients have been thanked for making an advanced clinical training session possible.

Clinicians from around the country came to the University Hospital of North Tees to learn the skills of treating common conditions in patients of the

liver, gallbladder, bile ducts and pancreas using a technique called endoscopic retrograde cholangio pancreatography (ERCP).

ERCP requires an endoscopic (camera test) device, inserted via the mouth, to

explore the upper gastrointestinal area of the body. The patient is heavily sedated but conscious throughout the procedure.

The course, one of only two Joint Advisory Group approved training ERCP courses in the country, was made possible by 16 patients who have volunteered to play a part in the training by allowing the gastroenterologists to gain vital, hands-on experience.

Course director and Trust gastroenterology consultant Dr. Vikramjit Mitra said: "I cannot thank these patients enough.

"We spent a long time selecting the right people to make sure they could take part without making their symptoms worse and we simply asked them if they would like to help us.

"Following this training, my gastroenterology colleagues from across the country will go back to their individual workplaces to gain further training and start using their ERCP skills to help patients for many years to come. I am so grateful to our patients for making this happen."



Dr Vikram Mitra (left) with the training delegation

Trusts work together to ease suffering of spinal patients

Partnership is at the heart of all we do and patients are benefiting as a spinal service shared with South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust sees a local nurse deliver a procedure usually reserved for consultants.

Gill Rhind is a spinal triage and treat practitioner and one of the few nurses in the UK able to deliver a life-transforming pain-reducing spinal procedure.

The transforaminal epidural steroid injection is a complex process where pain-killing injections are delivered to specific nerve clusters to ease pain and discomfort.

Employed by South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Gill delivers a clinic at the University Hospital of Hartlepool every Friday as part of the two Trusts' partner working relationship.

Gill said: "Bad backs are sadly part of the aging process. It's the 'grey hair and wrinkles' you can't see. The wear and tear of a bad back can't be reversed but we can treat the pain effectively and help people live a happier and healthier life.

"It's really nice to spend a morning a week here. I've had to learn some new systems and we are all very open to sharing ideas and new ways of treating our patients."

Gill is no stranger to the University Hospital of Hartlepool, having begun her career at the hospital. Her parents also worked there during the 1980s.

Gill commented: "My dad was a consultant urologist here and my mum was a business manager. They both enjoyed working here and had lots of friends among the staff.

"When I came back after all these years, I was touched that some people recognised me from when I used to work here. This hospital has always had that 'family feel' to it and it made the welcome even warmer."



Gill Rhind, spinal triage and treat practitioner



Leanne Mitchell, outpatient therapies team lead

Physio reflects on her role highlighting the importance of physical activity

A physiotherapist has spoken about the impact of a regional role she has led to promote the benefits of physical exercise.

Leanne Mitchell, a former paediatric specialist physio and now outpatient therapies team lead, has reflected on her role as 'Physical Activity Clinical Champion' for the North East – a position she recently completed.

In her two years in the role, she has carried out peer-to-peer training for health professionals across a host of organisations, giving them knowledge and skills to include the issue of physical activity advice in their everyday practice.

The latest figures show that 23.1% of Stockton and 36.7% of the Hartlepool population are physically inactive.

The region as a whole is the most inactive in England – with 25.6% of people not moving enough.

Leanne said: "It is so important we get key messages across to our population about the importance of physical activity.

"And one of our ways of doing that is to educate health professionals around how they can include this information in their clinical work to help our population.

"If we can get that message across to our public about the importance of activity, we can prevent so many from getting to the point where they even need to come to hospital for our help."

The Physical Activity Clinical Champions (PACC) programme is part of the Moving Healthcare Professionals Programme (MHPP), a partnership programme led by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and Sport England.

It aims to increase awareness, skills and change clinical practice of health professionals in the promotion of physical activity to patients at risk of, or with, health conditions.

Leanne has visited staff in dozens of organisations include neighbouring health trusts, GP practices and universities to deliver the training programme.

"The doctor told me to take her home because she wouldn't be here in 48 hours" – Teesside mum shares story of rare genetic condition in memory of baby daughter

A Thornaby mum has taken it upon herself to raise awareness of Smith-Lemli-Opitz syndrome, where a symptom linked to the rare condition took the life of her nine-month old daughter. Now she is raising money for the hospitals that looked after her.

On Tuesday 22 September 2020, health care assistant Lisa Rogers made her way to the University Hospital of North Tees when she had concerns about her baby's movements following a healthy pregnancy.

Lisa's labour was induced and at 6:25am on Friday 25 September she welcomed Nancy Jo Anne Rogers, weighing six pounds three ounces, to the world by caesarean section. It was only upon Nancy's arrival that she and her midwifery team recognised something was out of the ordinary.

Lisa, now 40, said: "When she was born, she didn't cry. She had difficulty breathing – she had a wheeze.

"The only thing I remember saying was that she only had four fingers – she didn't have her little finger on her left hand."

Two months later, Nancy was diagnosed with Smith-Lemli-Opitz syndrome (SLOS) – a condition which affects multiple body systems, including the internal organs, growth and intellectual development, facial features, fingers and toes.

Nancy surpassed expectations and continued to grow and develop.

Lisa continued: "She laughed constantly, she started waving and smiling. She developed her own little character.

"All the things we thought she would never do, she did. And more. For a baby that was so poorly, she accomplished more in her nine months of life than most of us do in a year."

On 5 July 2021, Nancy was taken to the University Hospital of North Tees by ambulance where she received treatment after Lisa noticed she was struggling to breathe.

She sadly died on the children's ward two days later of heart failure and sepsis.

Since Nancy's passing in July last year, Lisa and her family have dedicated themselves to raising awareness of SLOS and raising money for the organisations who helped Nancy.

She has raised and donated money, along with blankets and clothing, to the special care baby unit at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Lisa said: "I can't describe how thankful I am to everyone in the special care baby unit at North Tees - to Zoe Kitching and Jayne Jobling especially.

"Jayne came to Nancy's funeral and continues to be a great support to me, as are a lot of other nurses."

"Nancy simply wouldn't have had her nine and a half months without the NHS."



Jayne Jobling and Zoe Kitching (left to right) with generous donations from Lisa Rogers

Nancy Rogers

Special poem telling end of life care story from a hospital lift praised by local arts festival

A poem told by staff about the care of an end of life patient – through the location of a hospital lift – was praised after being showcased at the Darlington Arts Festival.

The poem – Sonnets from a Hospital Lift – tells the story of a dying patient who is visited by his wife in his final days.

Told from within the space of a hospital lift at the University Hospital of North Tees, it focuses on the emotions and experiences of people who step inside it.

Mel McEvoy, nurse consultant in palliative care, wrote the poem some time ago and was invited to perform it at the festival.

He said: "This single multi-part poem consists of a series of monologues in sonnet form that take place in a hospital lift.

"I wanted to tell the story of a patient being visited by his wife – and the impact this patient had on so many of those staff who were caring for him.

"This was my way of showing what death can mean not just to a relative but to the staff who treat our patients.

"The poem has already been showcased at the Trust as part of an awareness event called Dying Matters Week – this was a further opportunity to highlight it outside of the organisation."

The poem was performed by Mel, alongside clinical effectiveness advisor John Blenkinsopp who both played the parts of various different voices.

To view a performance of the poem from the hospital's spirituality centre, visit the Trust's YouTube page.

Clinical effectiveness advisor John Blenkinsopp (left) with nurse consultant in palliative care Mel McEvoy



EAN nurse taking on Yorkshire Three Peaks to raise money for North Tees and Hartlepool

An emergency assessment unit (EAU) Sister, Leanne Constantine, is taking on Yorkshire Three Peaks as a thank you for her father's Covid-19 treatment.

The 42-year-old's father was treated at North Tees Intensive Care Unit (ITU) for three months in 2020 due to Covid-19 symptoms.

Leanne said: "We did the standard cards and donations to the ward staff but we always felt like we could do more to show our appreciation.

"Walking has been a big part of my dad's rehabilitation, it is how we spend time together and build his physical and mental strength up.

"When I saw the Trust was taking part in Yorkshire Three Peaks, I knew it was the perfect way to raise money for the ward."

Leanne is taking on the challenge with two other colleagues in the EAU, Adele Wilkinson and Frances Flanagan.

Although it is her first time taking part in a physical fundraiser, Leanne has been undertaking cardio three times a week, using it as an opportunity to clear her head after 12-hour shifts.

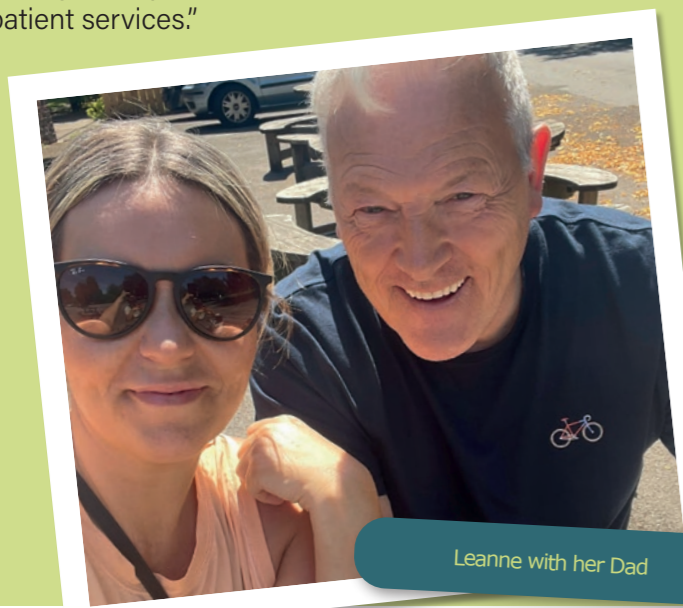
"We all have family and friends that use our hospital services. It is the heart of our local community and raising money for the Trust helps improve patient services."

As well as supporting her father's rehabilitation, training for Yorkshire Three Peaks has pushed her own exercise goals as well as allowing her to meet staff from across the Trust.

Leanne continued: "I come from an active family. My husband regularly runs the Great North Run and my son plays for Hartlepool Football Academy, so I have accountability.

"When my dad was in hospital, he was active, even with a tracheostomy and ventilators attached; he was on an exercise bike!"

You can help support Leanne and raise money for ITU by donating to her Just Giving page: www.justgiving.com/team/EAUNorthTees



Leanne with her Dad

Local pharmacist takes on Great North Run in aid of North Tees and Hartlepool Maternity services

Community Pharmacist Dr Lottie Ayres has dusted off her running shoes to take part in 2022's Great North Run (GNR), raising money for North Tees and Hartlepool Together.

Aiming to raise £250 for the maternity services, Lottie is keen to give back to the department who supported her through the birth of her son, Rudy, six years ago:

"Having Rudy was a tough experience but the team at North Tees and Hartlepool were amazing. It did not go to our original plan and I ended up in an emergency C-section.

"The team were so calm and comforting; a nurse even held my hand and talked me through the process. Their birth reflection service helped me understand why Rudy's birth happened the way it did and allowed me to own our story.

"I have a huge amount of respect for the department, my hope is that doing the GNR will raise awareness of them and the amazing things that they do."

One organisation Lottie has recently joined is the North Tees and Hartlepool Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP), a national organisation established to link maternity services with patient voices.

The NHS working group is made up of a team of women and their families, commissioners and providers (midwives and doctors) working together to review and contribute to the development of local maternity care.

This is not Lottie's first GNR experience; in 2018, she took part in the event to raise money for a mental health charity after sadly losing her friend to suicide.

Running has helped Lottie to process these events; likening exercise with friends as a "therapy session" her training is now underway for 2022.

Lottie said: "Last time I was in a rush to get the end but my plan is to take it all in this time, fully immersing myself in the magical experience."

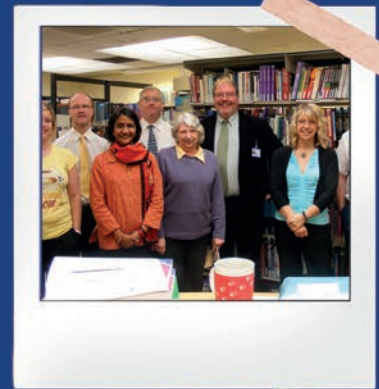
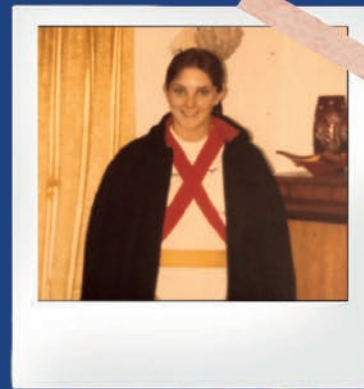
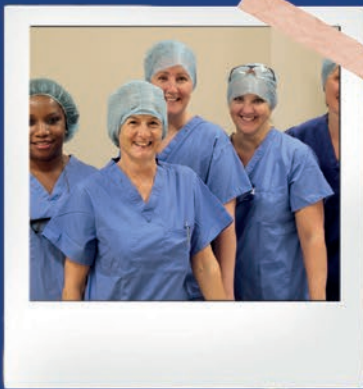
All donations are welcome to Lottie's Great North Run page: www.greatnorthrun.enthuse.com/pf/lottie-ayres-nicholson-741ad



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