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North Tees and Hartlepool
NHS Foundation Trust

anthem



Tees Valley Community Diagnostic Centre welcomes first patients

The centre offers rapid scans, tests and checks to speed up diagnosis and follow-up treatment. Read more on page 12.

Also in this issue:

The college course showing the harsh realities of knife crime

New stop smoking service launched in Hartlepool

Investing in robot technology



“This is a once in a generation opportunity to have a first class facility for our community, in a modern building away from the busy hospital environment”

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the first edition of Anthem magazine for 2025.

As you will see from our front page, the opening of the Tees Valley Community Diagnostic Centre is really exciting news for the region. This is a once in a generation opportunity to have a first class facility for our community, in a modern building away from the busy hospital environment. It is fantastic to see that patients are coming away having had a very positive experience – turn to pages 12 and 13 for more on this. It is also a chance to combine the expertise of our staff from across the University Hospitals Tees group, and I know that the teams are already really benefitting from this.

You will also see in this issue news about our CareScan system, which has marked one million scans since it was launched. By scanning a unique barcode on patient wristbands, clinical devices and products, it is helping our teams provide safe, high quality care to our patients and the team involved should be congratulated on its success.

There is also news about our Health and Social Care Academy team, launched last year in partnership with our local college and council in Hartlepool. The team there, for the very first time, have been reaching out into the community to deliver knife crime training to our young people in colleges. A really fantastic initiative which shows the far reaching influence our teams can have within the community and the importance we hold as an anchor organisation.

You will also see we launched robotic technology in our surgical hub at Hartlepool. This will help us with ambitions across our group as we look to invest in our operating theatres across our patch.

There are also stories of staff successes, awards, innovations and much more.

I encourage you to please have a read through and let us know what you think.

And, please do share your stories, whether you are a patient, a visitor at one of our sites or one of our dedicated staff members.

Thank you!

Stacey Hunter

GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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CareScan hits one millionth scan

CareScan, North Tees and Hartlepool's barcode scanning safety system, has reached a ground breaking milestone – hitting one million scans in clinical operations.

Ish Ahmed, consultant gastrointestinal surgeon and CareScan clinical lead, said: "Our operating theatre processes are now streamlined, allowing us to make quicker, more informed clinical decisions and deliver faster, more accurate patient care.

"We have freed up precious staff time for our focus to be where it truly matters, on our patients."

Simply by scanning a unique barcode on patient wristbands, clinical devices and products, CareScan performs vital safety checks and provides alerts for out of date products and, where applicable, also offers general usage guidance. These alerts provide decision support that is key to further improving patient safety.

Anthony Kennerley, CareScan project lead at the trust, commented: "Reaching one million scans is not only a celebration of how effectively our hospital has embraced and optimised this solution, but also a pivotal moment inspiring us to explore new applications across the trust, reinforcing our commitment to excellence in patient care and operational efficiency."

Matt Wright, CEO of CareScan, said: "We are incredibly excited about the future of CareScan and our partnerships with teams such as those at North Tees and Hartlepool.

"CareScan's success in clinical settings is sparking widespread interest, and we look forward to building trusted collaborations that support evolving regulatory needs – all with a focus on enhancing patient care."

The CareScan team was also recently visited by GS1 UK, the not-for profit organisation which sets the standards to support the NHS in identifying, capturing and sharing information through the unique identification of every person, product and place.

Glen Hodgson, head of healthcare at GS1 UK, said: "North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust excels in innovation, quality care and operational efficiency through collaborative approaches. Every individual at this trust contributes to this legacy."



Pictured: Tony Naylor, Kat Chapman, Anthony Kennerley and Ish Ahmed.

Staff share the hard-hitting impact of knife crime with young Teessiders as part of new training course

NHS trainers have been speaking to young people in Teesside about the devastating impact of knife crime as part of a special new course.



Pictured: Session taking place at Redcar and Cleveland College.

The sessions, run by staff at our Health and Social Care Academy, highlight the realities of having to treat knife wounds in the NHS to teenagers – the group most disproportionately affected by knife crime.

From August 2023 to the end of July 2024, 186 young people aged 24 and under were victims of a crime involving a knife or a bladed weapon in the Cleveland Police area.

The new course is led by Teresa Pounder, education lead, and Joel Pitchers, simulation technician – both from the academy, which is managed by North Tees and Hartlepool. They were joined by vascular surgeon Mr Barney Green who works at The James Cook University Hospital and as part of the University Hospitals Tees group.

The sessions see Barney showcase his first-hand experience of what it takes to treat stab wounds in the operating theatre.

Education lead Teresa Pounder said: “Sadly, there has been a rise in knife crime in the last 10 years, so being able to go into schools and show first-hand how the choices they make, and the consequences of those choices, can have a long-lasting impact.

“It has been humbling to be able to lead on delivering such important sessions with our colleague Barney within our local colleges and we hope to extend the programme further in the coming months.”

The new course was developed as part of a campaign involving Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence. Sessions have so far been held at Stockton Riverside, Redcar and Cleveland College and The Skills Academy, Billingham.

The sessions also highlighted the impact knife crime has on victims, their families and the local community, as well as the long-term psychological and medical impacts and what first aid the college students could provide to victims while waiting for an ambulance to arrive.

Barney said: “No one ever wants to have to encounter someone who has been the victim of knife crime and sadly we see multiple serious incidents from stabbing every month.

“But we hope that through these sessions we will be able to explore the ‘prevention is better than a cure’ philosophy with respect to carrying knives. It’s also an important opportunity to equip the learners with some basic skills that they could use should they sadly ever find someone bleeding from a knife wound.

“As much as we hope they will never have to use these skills, we hope that these simple techniques may just help save a life.”

The organisation of these important sessions was facilitated by colleagues from the Education Training Collective, resilience and wellbeing officer Tom Markham, and enrichment officer Liam McCormick.

New stop smoking service launched for Hartlepool

Smokers in Hartlepool looking to quit can now get improved specialist support to help them stub it out for good.

Hartlepool Borough Council has commissioned the trust and Hartlepool & Stockton Health to deliver the new Hartlepool Stop Smoking Service.

The new service, which complements existing schemes, will provide:

- **A 12 week support programme**
- **Face-to-face clinics across the community and workplaces**
- **Telephone consultations**
- **Home visits for housebound patients**

The team, which can take self referrals from health staff as well as those in the community, will also offer training and support for other community professionals.

Councillor Brenda Harrison, leader of Hartlepool Borough Council and chair of the Hartlepool Health and Wellbeing Board, said: “We’re delighted to launch this service which will build on the support already available – including the excellent work being done by our

community navigators – to provide a much more extensive and accessible service.

“Not only do many people die each year from smoking-related diseases such as lung cancer, many more are living with debilitating illnesses such as COPD.

You can stop smoking, and now there’s even more support to help you achieve that, so please take the first step and give the Hartlepool Stop Smoking Service a call.

Esther Mireku, public health consultant at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, commented: There are no positives to smoking. The benefits literally begin from that first cigarette you choose not to smoke and after quitting for just one year, the risk of heart attack halves compared to that of a smoker.

The service will also be active in the community using Hartlepool & Stockton Health’s mobile Research and Learning, Primary Health unit, nicknamed the RALPH bus.

The Hartlepool Stop Smoking Service can be contacted on **01642 383819**.



Pictured: (Left to right) North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust public health consultant Esther Mireku, leader of Hartlepool Borough Council and chair of the Hartlepool Health and Wellbeing Board Councillor Brenda Harrison, and nurse lead for Hartlepool & Stockton Health Fran Gibson.



Pictured: Katie Miller began her new role as urology specialist nurse manager in early 2025.

A day in the life of... a urology specialist nurse manager

Katie Miller, 37, has spent her career with North Tees and Hartlepool since qualifying in 2008.

After moving into the urology department almost six years ago, she has worked her way through additional training and up the ranks. In January this year, she began her new role as urology specialist nurse manager – leading on nursing in the department for patients with issues affecting the kidneys, bladder, prostate and more.

We sat down with Katie to find out more about her new role and how the department is supporting nurses' aspirations.

Q: What does your role as urology specialist nurse manager involve?

I'm still completing clinical tasks – and my hope is that I always will.

I carry out two week rule clinics for prostate patients with the aim of leading to a faster diagnosis – which, in turn, will lead to patients receiving treatment earlier, resulting in better outcomes. Outside of clinical duties, the role mainly involves managing our nurses, doing the rotas and lots of other things people maybe don't realise.

We've just begun looking at our cancer pathways – how we can change them, improve them and how we can also improve the follow up for our patients.

Q: What's a shift like?

It's a lot more varied than I think people believe it's going to be.

We do a lot of clinical tasks. We have our own nurse-led clinics for prostate and kidney cancer follow up and we do chemotherapy into the bladder and immunotherapy. We also do bladder treatments, remove stents, flexible cystoscopy and we run haematuria clinics.

We have a lot of contact with our patients – from diagnosis, through treatment and then through follow up as well. We get to build up a really good rapport with them because we follow them right through their journey, and we try keep the same nurses where we can for that continuation of care.

Q: What do you love about your role?

For me, it's being with a patient through their journey.

When they're given their cancer diagnosis, we sit and speak to them afterwards – to give them the support and comfort we know they need. We know what's happened before their diagnosis, we care for them throughout their treatment and then we follow up afterwards. We're right there with them.

Local artist's painting finds new home in hospital

Inspirational artwork featuring nursing staff from the trust has found a new home at the University Hospital of North Tees, following a successful local exhibition.

The painting was created by artist Lucas Roy in 2024 as part the 'Nursing in the Tees Valley' exhibition held at Kirkleatham Museum. It has now found a prominent new place outside of the hospital's respiratory wards 24 and 25.

It is now one of the first of a new trust arts initiative to display and champion local artwork on its estate to improve health and wellbeing and hospital environments for patients, visitors and staff.

Dr Jean MacLeod, lead medical examiner and chair of visual arts council for the trust said: "The environment of a hospital can have a huge impact on patient, visitor and staff experiences and art can help support patient mood, recovery and wellbeing.

"Lucas' work is one of the first in what we hope will be the start of showcasing and celebrating local artists across our hospital estate and we are absolutely thrilled to have this piece to display in what we thought was a very appropriate location outside of our respiratory ward."

The brightly coloured mixed-media piece is a montage, featuring past and present nursing staff and prominent local landmarks. It also draws upon staff and patients' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lucas said: "My artwork is often inspired by popular culture, nature and current events and I like to use a variety of mixed



media in my pieces. This piece in particular was created as a montage of images to try and capture the essence of nursing, as part of the 'Nursing in the Tees Valley' exhibition.

"Each image is a vivid story of care and resilience and I drew upon the stories and histories of a group of local healthcare professionals before I created the work.

"The impact that healthcare professionals can have on the patients is just as important and profound as the impact patients can have on clinicians and I hope that my work is a good representation of that special relationship."



Pictured: Amongst members of the respiratory team at the event to officially unveil the painting were respiratory lead Dr Vandana Jeebun, Dr Katie Elmer, ward matrons Elizabeth Meldrum and Maria Lawson, group chief nurse Hilary Lloyd, site director of nursing Beth Swanson and group chair Professor Derek Bell.

Hospital invests in first surgery robot technology



Pictured: The operating theatre team prepare the robot ahead of surgery.

The University Hospital of Hartlepool has welcomed the first robotic technology to its operating department – with patients having knee surgery set to benefit.

The site has invested in the ROSA robot for patients needing a knee joint replacement. The state of the art technology helps surgeons position implants more accurately during an operation.

Anwar Jafri, consultant orthopaedic surgeon, said: "This robotic surgical assistant is going to help us offer individualised treatment for each patient. It is also going to help us plan, prepare and position implants with a high degree of precision and consistency.

"It will add to the other cutting-edge technologies we already use in the service. These include the mymobility app for patients undergoing joint replacement surgery which we have pioneered with our industry partners Apple and Zimmer Biomet."

The app can be used by a patient on their smartphones – allowing health staff to support patients with education and advice both before and after surgery.

The trust first invested in robotic technology in its other operating department at the University Hospital of North Tees some time ago. The Da Vinci robot is helping to improve accuracy, reduce pain after surgery and help get patients home sooner.

The trust is also investing in a new robotic and emergency maternity theatre at the North Tees site.

Sarah Waite, theatre robotic matron, said: "It's an exciting time for the trust as we significantly invest in robotic technology to help provide even better treatment and care for our patients."

Last year the Hartlepool site was successful in being awarded surgical hub accreditation from NHS England – meaning it can increase the number of non-urgent operations it carries out for issues like hip and knee replacements, gynaecology, surgical and breast procedures.



Pictured: Theatre robotic matron Sarah Waite (far left) and consultant orthopaedic surgeon Anwar Jafri (second from left) with other members of the theatre team.

Ward matron develops course to improve care for elderly patients

A hospital matron has created a new training course for staff to help them better care for elderly patients.

The new two-day training course was developed by Jess Trewren, matron of ward 40 – the elderly care unit at the University Hospital of North Tees. Open to registered nurses and healthcare assistants who support elderly patients, it gives a comprehensive overview of frailty, dementia, fall-related injuries, working collaboratively with families and more.

Jess said: "As an acute trust, we have elderly patients on every single ward. This comprehensive training programme is to help staff on any ward to better understand the needs of those patients.

"Staff are going to be learning lots of new skills so they know that they're giving the best care possible. They'll be using evidence-based practice to enhance the experience of our elderly patients."

The two-day training covers the Frailty Framework of Core Capabilities, including:

- Understanding frailty, frailty identification and assessment
- Dementia

- Speech and language therapy, including dysphagia and dysphasia
- Polypharmacy
- Delirium
- Continence
- Falls and fall-related injuries
- Deconditioning
- Families and carers as partners in care, collaborative and integrated working, care and support planning
- Person centred approaches
- Physical health in the elderly
- Enhanced care
- Parkinson's disease

The first cohort for this training launches this spring.

If you're a member of staff and would like more information, please get in touch with Jess on jessica.trewren@nhs.net



Pictured: Jess Trewren, matron of the elderly care unit at North Tees.

Helping to reduce the number of missed hospital appointments

A new campaign is reducing the number of missed hospital appointments across the Tees Valley and beyond.

University Hospitals Tees saw 70,592 outpatient and 2,469 theatre appointments wasted from April to December 2024 due to patients not turning up for their appointment or cancelling the night before or on the day of surgery.

Now staff are asking patients to contact the relevant department with at least 24 hours' notice to let them know if they need to cancel or re-arrange their appointment or surgery date. This can then be re-allocated to somebody else.

They are also encouraging patients who struggle to get to hospital because of financial reasons to get in touch to see if they are eligible for travel expenses.

Austin Mathews, consultant anaesthetist and theatre lead at North Tees and Hartlepool, said: "A lot of preparation goes on behind the scenes to make sure we have the right team and the right set of equipment and facilities are available on the day. If a surgery date has been confirmed, we are urging all patients to try their best to come in.

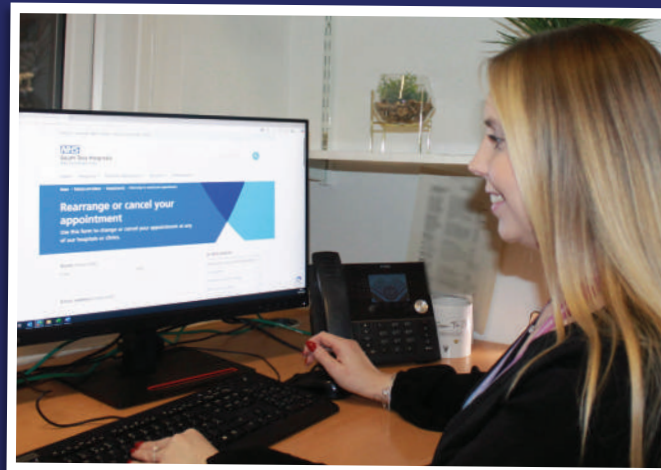
"We understand there are genuine reasons why people are unable to attend and need to reschedule, so if that's the case, we're asking patients to contact us as soon as possible so that we can offer that slot to someone else on the waiting list."

One group of patients really feeling the impact are those waiting to be seen or treated for endometriosis at South Tees Hospitals.

Jo Jordan, general manager for obstetrics and gynaecology at South Tees Hospitals said: "We are experiencing lots of patients not turning up for their clinic appointments and on the same hand, seeing a huge increase in the number of

requests to be seen sooner, particularly those experiencing symptoms of endometriosis and other similar conditions.

"The effective management of these chronic conditions rely on patients being seen and treated as soon as possible. Therefore, we need patients who are unable to make their appointments to let us know in advance so that these appointments can be reallocated to help other patients move up the waiting list and be diagnosed and treated as soon as possible."



Pictured: Jo Jordan, general manager for obstetrics and gynaecology at South Tees Hospital.



Pictured: Austin Mathews, consultant anaesthetist and theatre lead at North Tees and Hartlepool.

How to cancel or rearrange an appointment across University Hospitals Tees:

- Follow the instructions on your appointment letter
- Request to cancel or change an appointment by logging into the DrDoctor patient engagement portal (South Tees)
- Submit an online request (South Tees): www.southtees.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/appointments/rearrange-cancel
- Access the online directory to contact the department direct (North Tees and Hartlepool): www.nth.nhs.uk/patients/manage-your-appointments/appointments

From apprentice novice to group director of estates: Decoding Steven Taylor's journey

Group director of estates Steven Taylor shares his journey from apprentice electrician to spearheading estates and capital planning for University Hospitals Tees.

Steven kickstarted his career as an apprentice electrician at North Tees and Hartlepool in 1989. He assisted the estates team with the maintenance, repair and installation of electrical systems across the hospital sites.

Here he developed a specialised skill set working under the supervision of experienced electricians and performing installation and maintenance tasks to ensure the effective operation of various electrical equipment.

Steven said: "My apprenticeship has been a rewarding experience for me and has helped me gain knowledge to work in diverse areas.

"Apprenticeships present a fantastic opportunity to kickstart your career and gain access to a company or a sector you want to work in. While doing an apprenticeship, you will learn skills that are relevant to the sector you desire to work in and gain valuable work experience while getting paid.

"My advice would be to definitely go for an apprenticeship if you can."

Following his apprenticeship, Steven completed a bachelor's in engineering from the University of Sunderland in 1995. He then took up the role of project officer at South Tees in 2005.

Slowly and steadily, Steven climbed the ladder and rose through the ranks in the trust. Throughout his time, he was commended for his proactive approach to problems and was a team player. He was credited for helping the estates team in the smooth running, general upkeep and maintenance of the trust's estates.

Steven moved on from his role in South Tees and shifted his base to North Tees and Hartlepool, working for the trust's subsidiary company, NTH Solutions, when it was established in 2018.

Following last year's formation of University Hospitals Tees, Steven was appointed as the first group director of estates, capital planning and facilities.



Pictured: Group director of estates Steven Taylor.

As a director of a hospital group with more than 15,000 staff, he strives to not only provide the best possible estates, facilities and procurement services to patients but to look outside the organisation for opportunities where collective skills and knowledge could bring in external income for the benefit of our patients.

For more information about NHS apprenticeships and to find the career path for you, scan the QR code to visit NHS Health Careers.



New town centre NHS community health facility welcomes first patients

The first patients have been welcomed into a new state-of-the-art community health facility in Teesside.

The Tees Valley Community Diagnostic Centre will offer rapid tests for a range of health issues including cancer, heart and lung disease.

The site is being run by the University Hospitals Tees group, with the estates facilities managed by NTH Solutions LLP. It will include facilities such as CT scanners, two MRI scanners, ultrasound machines, X ray facilities and a range of heart, lung and blood function tests.

Jonny Rutherford was one of the first patients to be treated, having an MRI scan on his knee.

Jonny, 34 from Billingham, said: "Everything was very straightforward from the moment we left for the appointment. My dad drove me along, we got parked very easily close to the building. It was surreal being in a brand new building.

"I was seen by the radiology team who were very helpful. Everything felt very calm and safe, staff were also very friendly and helpful. A really positive experience."

Phil Woolfall, a radiologist and clinical lead for the centre, said: "We know patients who come here will have the best possible experience. A quicker appointment, a convenient journey to the building, diagnostic tests in a pleasant environment out of the hospital setting and a fantastic facility for our teams to work in.

"We are also thankful to all of our organisations involved in these works, including our council and construction partners, who have gone above and beyond on this project."

The centre, built by Kier, is based on the southern end of the Stockton Waterfront site. It is part of the wider transformation of the town centre to create inspiring and attractive public spaces, led by Stockton on Tees Borough Council.

Councillor Lisa Evans, leader of Stockton on Tees Borough Council, said: "I am pleased that Stockton Town Centre will be home to such an innovative facility and it's fantastic to see it welcome its first patients. The new diagnostic centre will have a huge impact on residents' access to health services, further improving health and wellbeing for many people across the Borough.

"This is also a major investment which will help drive footfall in Stockton Town Centre, where people can come not only for convenient appointments, but also to be able to access local facilities, shops and spend time in the town centre, in an attractive setting of an urban park."

Dan Doherty, regional director for Kier Construction North & Scotland said: "We're really proud of our work to deliver the Tees Valley Community Diagnostic Centre. I look forward to seeing the benefits the new facility will have for local people."

It will be supported by three 'spoke' diagnostic sites – at the University Hospital of Hartlepool and Friarage Hospital in Northallerton and a new service which recently opened at Redcar Primary Care Hospital following extensive refurbishment works over the last few months.



Pictured: Main reception front desk.



Pictured: First patient Jonny Rutherford with senior radiographer Helen Stamp.

"Staff are enjoying working in a fantastic modern environment, designed in the best way for patients."

- Jo Ann Hinchley-Smith, MRI modality manager at South Tees Hospitals

"The building is light and spacious and staff are all working really well together – feedback from patients so far has also been really positive."

- Jacqueline Walls, clerical officer at North Tees and Hartlepool working in the main reception area

"This is the first time we have worked as one team with our colleagues at North Tees and Hartlepool – it's exciting for the team to be working together. This building is going to allow us to work in a planned way which our patients will benefit from."

- Laura Swann, CT team lead at South Tees Hospitals

"There is a real excitement among all staff to be working here together – it's been a fantastic experience so far."

- Lesley Blakemore, domestic assistant at NTH Solutions



Pictured: Jo-Ann pictured, centre, with colleagues.



Pictured: Jacqueline Walls, left, with colleague Iyanuoluwa Babatunde.



Pictured: Laura, pictured third from right, with members of the combined CT team.



Pictured: Lesley, left, pictured with colleagues.



Pictured: The iSPA service provides guidance and support in accessing health and social care services.

The integrated single point of access service supporting patient care

The integrated single point of access (iSPA) team is the central point of contact for all health and social care services across the Tees Valley.

The iSPA provides one point of access with one phone number for South Tees and one for North Tees and Hartlepool. Patients and professionals can get in touch when they require advice, guidance, assessment and access to health and social care services.

iSPA ensures patients and professionals can access the services they need at the right time in the right place and assists adults to remain in a place they call home.

Siobhan Smith, senior lead for transfer of care and iSPA said: "The iSPA teams are dedicated and work hard to provide an integrated approach across health and social care, to ensure patients are cared for in the community."

The service aims to provide a coordinated response through a single point of access, ensuring a 'no wrong door' ethos is applied. The team has access to multi professional, multi organisational clinical and non clinical systems.

The teams within iSPA triage and prioritise all patients who may require an urgent community response or are suitable to receive hospital at home services. They work closely with North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) to ensure where possible people are cared for in the community, avoiding an unnecessary trip to the emergency department.

The single point of access receives referrals from several sources, including primary care, acute based wards including front of house, primary care hospitals, community-based health and social care services, as well as care homes and the voluntary sector.

The service also accepts complex patient referrals into a multi disciplinary team from any health and social care practitioner.

All referrals are captured via the call handling and clerical team. They are then processed and sent through to the integrated triage team – which consists of a community nurse and community therapist.

Contact

South Tees Hospitals iSPA
Open 8am to 8pm, seven days a week
01642 065070

North Tees and Hartlepool iSPA
Open 24 hours, seven days a week
01429 522500

Health staff volunteer to improve healthcare in Cambodia

Healthcare staff from across University Hospitals Tees recently made the trip to Cambodia to support local hospitals and doctors in improving healthcare in the country.

Cheryle Buckle, a 40 year old senior wheelchair therapist at North Tees and Hartlepool, and Greta Rocchino, a 28-year old urology nurse from South Tees Hospitals, spent 10 days in Battambang with charity Transform Healthcare Cambodia.

Cheryle, Greta and the rest of the Transform Healthcare Cambodia team volunteered their time to provide education and training to Khmer healthcare staff at Battambang Provincial Referral Hospital and Roka Community Hospital.

During the trip, Cheryle met with a young boy who is a wheelchair user as a result of a farming accident. Cheryle assessed his upper limb function and taught him how to safely transfer in and out of his chair independently using a transfer board.

She and the team then visited a local carpenter to make three copies of the transfer board – one for the boy and two for local hospitals to be used as prototypes.

Cheryle said: "Watching that little boy give it a shot and nail it first go felt like silent fireworks were going off everywhere as our hearts burst from the excitement and joy from him and his mum. We provided an opportunity for independence for this lovely little boy.

"I have so many moments that have been rewarding and emotive but this one was really special."



Pictured: Cheryle (right) teaching transfer skills to therapy staff.



Pictured: (Left to right) Wheelchair therapist Cheryle Buckle and urology nurse Greta Rocchino.

Meanwhile, Greta taught lectures on sepsis management and observation as well as interactive hand hygiene sessions. She then spent a further month completing a medical internship in Chiang Mai, Thailand, with the Friends for Asia Foundation.

Greta said: "One reflection for me, brutally and honestly, is how much the NHS gets taken for granted. The Cambodian hospitals generally have less resources than the UK, however the staff are equally as capable. There is definitely space for improvement in the Cambodian healthcare system, but what also struck me was how grateful everyone was for the care that they received."

Cheryle continued: "The dedication, commitment and determination from the health professionals to do their best is beautiful. This has been one of the most memorable and amazing experiences of my life."



Pictured: (Left to right) Greta Rocchino and Dr Oum Nhel.

New scheme helps army veterans back into work

University Hospitals Tees' new volunteer to career programme provides work experience and dedicated training to help retired Armed Forces personnel into a role with the NHS.



Pictured: (Left to right) Lindsay Rutherford, Hoe and Paul Wharton from the North Tees and Hartlepool volunteer coordination team, and Sam Taylor, therapeutic care operational lead at South Tees Hospitals.

We are offering veterans a gradual route back into work and support in their transition into civilian life. It comes after the success of previous schemes across the hospital group which have seen a number of people take on new roles through volunteering-based career pathways.

The new scheme has been launched collaboratively by North Tees and Hartlepool and South Tees Hospitals trusts – collectively forming University Hospitals Tees – along with County Durham and Darlington and Tees Esk and Wear Valley trusts, and volunteer charity Helpforce.

Sam Taylor, therapeutic care operational lead at South Tees Hospitals, said: "We know veterans can be met with challenges that most of us will never face. That's why it's so important that we're able to offer programmes such as this.

"This pathway provides a tailored approach to support not only veterans, but their spouses, children and loved ones as well, to gain experience in the NHS. It's an opportunity for participants to see what it's like working in the NHS and our individual organisations, to learn new skills and get one to one support in applying for health and care roles."

Paul Wharton, head of volunteering at North Tees and Hartlepool, continued: "Our two trusts are very proud

to hold the 'Veteran Aware' status to support those who have served for our country. This scheme, working with other NHS organisations in the area, is doing just that.

"We've held a number of veterans' coffee mornings in the last year to nurture a local network and understand the support veterans want and need. We know there's an appetite from the community to work in the NHS and now we're honoured to be able to offer that opportunity to them."

The volunteer to career programme allows veterans to explore careers and provides a direct route to work in the healthcare sector through career-based volunteering. They will also receive training to hone their skills and dedicated support for job applications and interviews.

For more information and to register your interest, please scan the QR code:



Derek takes a look back

As he turns 70, group chair Derek Bell OBE looks back on his 40+ year career and takes a look at the healthcare future he hopes to help bring to our region:

People think the NHS doesn't change but it's always changing.

When I qualified, a heart attack patient would spend several days in hospital on bed rest. Now they can be home in two days, being much more mobile and enjoying better outcomes. Our imaging technology has improved incredibly. Back in the day we had just X rays - now we have CT scans, MRI and nuclear imaging.

I'm pleased I kept up my clinical practice for as long as I did. I liked working with junior doctors and learning from my patients.

It's an honour to work with not only great clinicians but also alongside highly skilled researchers and leaders.

One of the things I'm most proud of is my involvement in the National Early Warning System. We created the standardised measure of key parameters to assess patients on admission to hospital, which is now used across the UK and in other parts of the world. Our lay members were surprised that this didn't already exist.

The future of healthcare

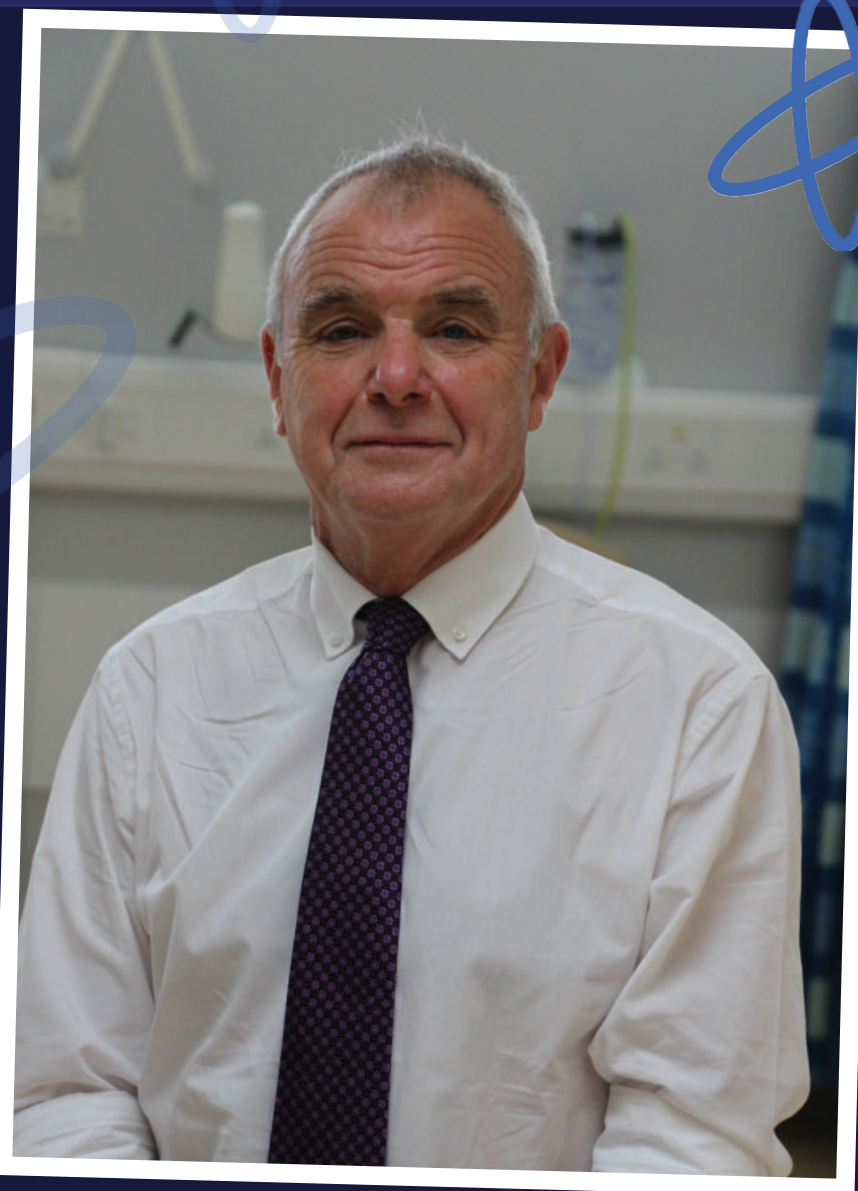
We have to improve the patient experience by putting them at the centre of all we do by being cognisant of their overall journey from the time of need onward. We must ensure we are treating the whole patient, not just that particular symptom, to help them get back to the best life possible.

I've had the opportunity to see healthcare around the world. We have to be more open to learning from other cultures and not being so focused on North America. There are many countries delivering innovative care that we could take best practice from.

A key element of ensuring our clinical and financial stability is improving and expanding community-based care. Patients with deep vein thrombosis, and many other conditions, are usually outpatients now. Rather than spending a week on a hospital ward, they are back at home.

The NHS is always changing, always learning, always improving. I hope that as I look back on my career it's an ethos I have reflected and have encouraged others to take to heart.

I am sure that throughout the health and care system we are aware of the challenges facing us. It's important that we rise to this challenge and maximise the opportunities that University Hospitals Tees can deliver.



Pictured: Derek Bell





Pictured: Recent students who have taken part in the Student Academy programme.

New NHS work placement programme for aspiring physiotherapists

North Tees and Hartlepool's musculoskeletal physiotherapists are leading the way in physio education – after the success of their 'Student Academy'.

Launched in August 2024, the academy has not only improved the quality of students' experiences on placement, but has also increased the number of placements the trust can accommodate by 300%.

Previously, students completed placements under the supervision of one clinician. But Student Academy sees groups of six students undertake training from two supervising clinicians before running their own new patient clinics – firstly with student buddies and then building their own solo caseload.

It means that students get more face-time with patients, giving them hands-on experience in their early careers to understand patients' needs, build emotional skills and increase confidence.

Adam Butler, clinical team lead in iMSK physiotherapy, said: "It's been great to get Student Academy off the ground. We're in early days but feedback so far has been really positive, with students telling us it simulates what it will feel like to be a qualified physio. They get much more patient contact compared to our old system, building confidence and giving them that much-needed mileage in their early career.

"We've had such success with this new model that we're having to ask universities for more students which I suspect is something that doesn't happen often.

"It also means we can ensure students get the same experiences as one another – to make sure we're offering the same well-rounded placements for each and every aspiring physio."

This combined practical and theoretical training covers exercise therapy, manual therapy, clinical reasoning, public health and more – to ensure a comprehensive knowledge base, ready for their future as a qualified physiotherapist.

The team recently presented the new model to more than 50 trusts and higher education institutions across the country.

Adam continued: "It was great to be able to showcase Student Academy to other NHS organisations and universities. The model really has become the new norm for us and we hope we've inspired other organisations to adopt a similar approach."

Digital data for mums-to-be

As the digital revolution continues, with more daily activity taking place in the virtual realm as we shop, socialise and manage our lives online, the sad reality is that some are left behind.

Now an award winning midwifery-led scheme is reducing the digital divide across Teesside, offering free data so expectant mums can access their care records online.

Laura Stephenson, digital midwife for North Tees and Hartlepool, said: "All of our maternity records across the Tees are now stored on a secure online system called BadgerNet. This is so much easier for people to access their notes but only if they have internet access.

"The digital midwives in the North East and North Cumbria Local Maternity and Neonatal System decided we were going to sign up to The Good Things Foundation and the National Databank to offer women in the area access to free mobile data."

Grace Murray, digital midwife at South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, commented: "The NHS Long Term Plan recommends that all woman should have access to their maternity records. By providing free data we're ensuring that this recommendation is achievable.

"Both trusts have worked closely with a non-profit organisation in Middlesbrough called FurbdIT meaning we are also able to offer a refurbished phone if needed.

"Working with non-profits means we can offer this new service to some very vulnerable women at no additional cost to the NHS."

Grace recently accepted a baby lifeline UK MUM award (maternity unit marvels) at a special reception at the House of Commons. This recognised the service improvement brought about by her pioneering work with the Good Things Foundation to provide maternity patients with data loaded SIM cards. This model is now being adapted throughout England.

The new digital data service is up and running, with community midwives managing referrals for data support to digital midwives Grace Murray and Laura Stephenson.



Pictured: Digital midwives Grace Murray and Laura Stephenson with the baby lifeline UK MUM award.

Award win for digital project team

Congratulations to the trust's digital programme team on being named Digital, Data and Technology Team of the Year by the Skills Development Network.

Marie Collingwood-Graham, head of digital programmes, said: "Digital projects are all about improving patient care, ensuring the right information is available at the right time to all involved in our patients' care and enhancing the overall patient experience. Working with our clinical colleagues, we identify a problem and look for a technical solution. We see a problem that needs tackling, such as the use of paper, and we develop a solution."

"But in order to bring about that solution, we solve multiple problems along the way as it's not just about digitising like-for-like but improving processes and data flows. The team never gives up and always looks for innovative, creative solutions."

"I'm just so proud that the team's hard work and commitment has been recognised."

Clinical change lead Joe Telford commented: "The team has worked incredibly hard to implement a host of digital improvements throughout the trust. They work hand-in-hand with clinicians to ensure every new item of innovative technology not only helps assist our clinical teams, but also benefits patients."

"This team's work has directly helped reduce cases of sepsis. Our patients may never meet one our digital team, but they are benefitting from their work and skill every day."

The award citation noted: "Notably, they've digitised the nurse admissions process, reducing 10,500 nursing hours previously spent on paperwork and saving over £76,000 on ink, paper and printing."

"The implementation of electronic observations and sepsis screening tools, in collaboration with InterSystems' TrakCare electronic patient record system, has led to a 36% reduction in sepsis cases, saving lives and improving patient safety."



Pictured: Head of digital programmes Marie Collingwood-Graham and clinical change lead Joe Telford.



Pictured: The digital programme team won the Digital, Data and Technology Team of the Year award.

The incurable cancer support group providing help for patients and their families

A new support group is providing vital support for patients battling an incurable cancer diagnosis.

Originally launched back in September 2024 at North Tees and Hartlepool, the group is a safe space for patients and their families to share their experiences. It provides additional routes to support and advice, with monthly guest healthcare speakers.

Organised by cancer clinical educator Vicky Hay, with support from Macmillan information manager Alan Chandler, the latest group event saw guest speakers attend from the psychology and palliative care departments.

Cancer clinical educator Vicky Hay said: "The incurable cancer support group is very much about having a safe, shared space for patients and their family to be able to come and discuss their cancer experiences and to share that with others going through a similar experience."

"It's also about giving the group easy access to advice through the additional guest speakers – giving them an opportunity to ask any questions they may have and ensuring we are linking our patients in with the best quality care and support available to them."

"The group is open for all patients and family members who would like a safe space to discuss and get support for their incurable cancer diagnosis."

Those involved are given the opportunity each month to decide the topics they would like to hear about. They have included information about financial management, palliative care and nutrition and dietetics.

Patient and group member Alan Gray said: "The support group has been amazing. It's a really great place to get

access to so many healthcare professionals, advice and information.

"The group has also been going from strength-to-strength, and it's been good seeing our group members coming out of their shells and us all feeling comfortable enough to either just sit and listen, or to share our experiences in a safe and non-judgemental space."

"It really has been a great group to be a part of and I would wholeheartedly encourage others to join if they are on the fence."

The Incurable Cancer Support Group

Would you and your family (over 18) like to attend one of our support groups?

The group meets every last Tuesday of the month, 1:30 to 3:30pm at Butterwick Daycentre, Butterwick Hospice, TS19 8XN.

For further information and upcoming dates, telephone the cancer information centre on 01642 383041 or scan the QR code to visit our website:



Pictured: The group meets every month to discuss topics chosen by participants.



Pictured: (Left to right) Cancer clinical educator Vicky Hay, patient Alan Gray and Macmillan information manager Alan Chandler.

Festive fundraisers' donation to chemotherapy units

A huge thank you to David Hawkes, his partner Darren and their loved ones whose festive fundraiser raised more than £1,500 for North Tees and Hartlepool Together in memory of friend Mick Clocherty.

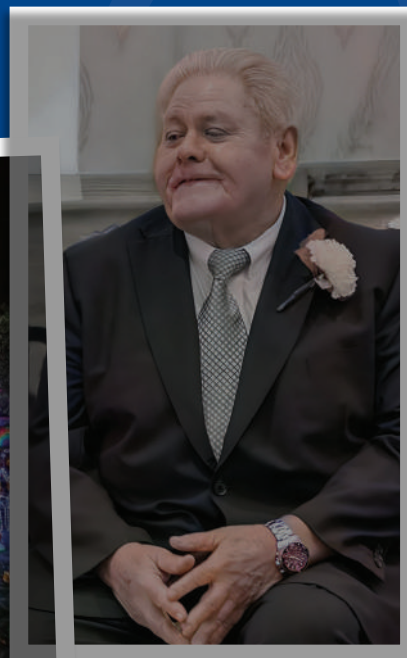
Mick was cared for dearly by our lung health and chemotherapy teams before he sadly passed away.

To honour Mick's memory, David and Darren opted to donate the £1,521 raised during their annual Christmas light switch on event to the chemotherapy units at North Tees and Hartlepool – as well as a further £230.59.

Thank you to David and Darren and their family and friends who organise this annual event - and to everyone who stopped by and donated. We are so grateful.



Pictured: David and Darren host a Christmas lights 'switch on' event each year at their home in Billingham.



Pictured: Mick Clocherty.

Basketball competition raises £600 for trust charity

The Teesside Filipino-British Basketball Community recently hosted a competition event to raise money for their chosen charity this year – North Tees and Hartlepool Together.

The event, held at Middlesbrough College on Saturday 18 January, raised £600 in support of patient care and staff wellbeing at North Tees and Hartlepool.

It was a fantastic event with teams from:

- North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust
- South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
- Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

A huge thank you also to all of the volunteers who gave up their time to make the event run smoothly. We hope everyone enjoyed the day as much as we did.



Pictured: Our 2025 North Tees and Hartlepool basketball squad.

New community maternity social prescriber roles to provide important support for patients

Funding from a local maternity partnership has allowed two social prescribers to be hired into our community midwifery teams.

The two new staff members begun in the newly created roles at the beginning of March – thanks to regional funding from the Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS).

The new social prescriber role supports the trust's community midwifery team to collaborate with partners and bridge the gap in provision and support for expectant mothers and patients.

The prescribers will help to develop a personalised care plan, working alongside the vulnerable midwives, and will use this to help address any patient concerns.

They will work alongside expectant mothers and children to help them with a whole range of issues. They may refer patients to support in areas such as:

- Debt advice
- Family hub services
- Mental health support
- Domestic abuse services
- Voluntary services
- Baby bank
- Foodbank

The two posts, based at Hartlepool and Stockton, will work alongside the community midwifery team and vulnerability midwives.

Senior clinical matron in community midwifery, Anne Marie Collighan said: "We're thrilled to announce that we have successfully hired into two new social prescribing roles.

"This link between our patients and other health professionals is so important to ensure we can support our patients during what is an emotive and sometimes vulnerable time in their lives. Our prescribers will be able to work alongside our patients, creating that all important personalised care plan, so we can help to support better outcomes overall for woman and babies.

"It's also about recognising the needs of our patients beyond healthcare. We live in a deprived area of the country and linking in with local support services is vital to ensure we can provide positive outcomes for our patients."

Funding from the regional LMNS partnership has been essential in ensuring the trust can support the roll out of social prescriber support and offer inclusive access to health services for maternity patients.



Pictured: Senior clinical matron in community midwifery Anne-Marie Collighan and specialist midwife Debra Gardner.

50 years in the NHS – how Chris moved from “bottom rung of the ladder” to finance chief

A NHS staff member who has committed 50 years of his life to the health service has spoken of his “pride” at the achievement.

Chris Macklin, a non-executive director at University Hospitals Tees, signed his first contract in the NHS on 24 February 1975. This was as a clerical officer at what was then called the Hampshire Area Health Authority in Southampton.

Since then, his career has taken him across the country in various roles – and has also included meeting his wife Claire and having his two children Robert and Hannah, before eventually moving to Teesside.

Chris said: “I started at the very bottom rung of the ladder and have enjoyed my career ever since – every single day.

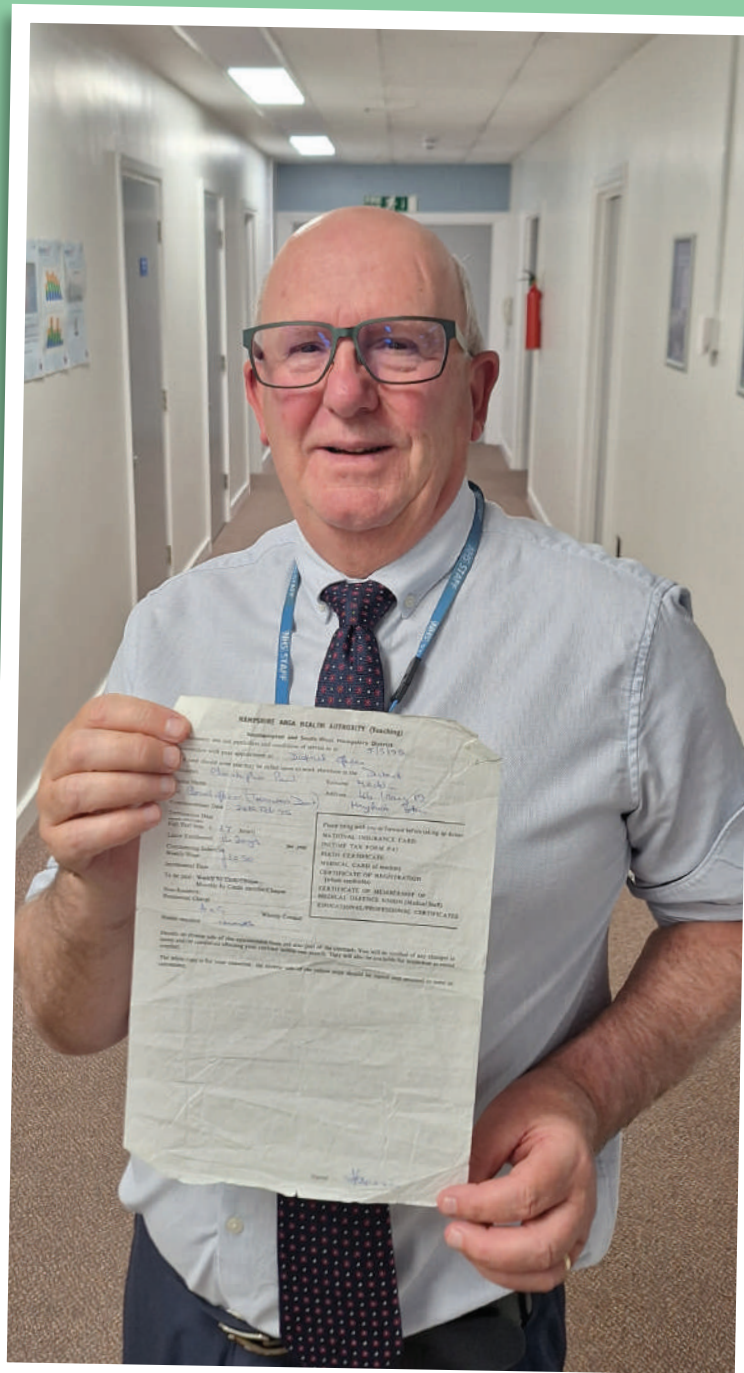
“I hope my enthusiasm has rubbed off on others and I have made a difference and been able to bring my experience and knowledge to different organisations.”

Chris, who will retire at the end of April as he prepares for the arrival of his first grandchild, has held numerous positions across the country over the years, including at Westminster Hospital in London, to North Wales and then to Norfolk.

It was in 1996 when he was asked to work at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead that he made his move to the north east. He then worked at other positions including as director of finance at Sunderland Primary Care Trust, then into a group position at NHS South of Tyne and Wear, before a move to the Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group as chief finance officer and then as a lay member.

After having a well-earned rest, he was asked if he was interested in serving as a non-executive director at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. This involved working closely with the trust’s director of finance, chairing committees and being part of several consultant appointment panels championing having a life and career in our region.

When the University Hospitals Tees group was formed between North Tees and Hartlepool and South Tees Hospitals trusts, Chris continued his role across the organisations.



Pictured: Chris Macklin with his first NHS contract earning £1,050 per annum.

Maternity service improvements lead to national recognition for midwife

A quality improvement lead has been recognised with an award for her work in helping the maternity service make a number of patient care improvements.

Danielle Stephens, a midwife in maternity, paediatric and pharmacy services, took on an added role as quality, safety and innovation lead in the service three years ago. Over that time, she has shared her knowledge and skills to help create a culture of learning and improvement in the service.

Her coaching and support has contributed to a number of key changes – including helping the obstetrics and maternity teams to reduce something known as post partum haemorrhage (PPH). This is where women who have had a baby can experience excessive bleeding for up to six weeks after giving birth.

She has now been recognised for her work by the national clinical director for improvement at NHS England, Dr Amar Shah, in a monthly celebration of improvers.

Danielle said: “This has really made my day – not only at the national recognition but to know that the team feel my role contributes in such a way.

“The last three years have been challenging but very rewarding, helping staff make that change when they see something they think can improve patient care.

“A significant amount of work has been carried out by the whole team, for example, to help the organisation become one of the best performing in the country in PPH.

“Staff have really engaged with this work and it has empowered them. Through this role, I am giving the power back to the team to be ones to drive change and make improvements.”

The trust’s faculty of learning, leadership and improvement team nominated Danielle for the award.

Part of the nomination read: “Danielle has embraced a journey of personal development in quality improvement. She has shared her knowledge, enthusiasm, time and leadership to all the people she comes into contact with and has significantly contributed to a real shift in culture and mindset.

“Danielle has promoted training at every opportunity, become a quality, service improvement and redesign associate and is a key member of our training faculty. She coaches teams and individuals at every opportunity. She is a great QI champion.”



Pictured: Midwife Danielle Stephens undertakes an additional role as quality, safety and innovation lead for the midwifery service.

Kerry Storey, wellbeing lead for NTH Solutions, was a guest speaker at a recent 'Schwartz Round' event organised by the trust.

This round, titled 'Working 9 to 5', encouraged an open discussion about how a good work-life balance can have a positive impact on health and mental wellbeing.

Kerry's talk focused on how her personal and professional experience to date drives her passion for supporting NTH Solutions colleagues in the workplace, alongside her focus on her own personal wellbeing. Her wellbeing service is a confidential, bespoke offering designed to support colleagues at our LLP with any personal or professional challenges they may be experiencing. As a trained psychodynamic counsellor, clinical supervisor and coach, Kerry provides colleagues with a safe space to talk openly about whatever is on their mind.

She said: "I feel very strongly with regard to how we support our colleagues, and it's important for us to appreciate what makes us different and to embrace our quirks.

"I refer to life as a journey and regularly ask myself and others, 'Why shouldn't we be our best selves?'

"Whilst it is certainly not for me to decide what makes somebody else their best self, I feel very privileged to have been invited to share such personal and often difficult journeys, which neither start at 9am nor finish at 5pm. Therefore, I will always encourage kindness, compassion, decency and to act with good intentions towards each other".

With training in bereavement and loss, suicide intervention and prevention, domestic violence and neurodiversity among other areas, Kerry also frequently supports colleagues who have people leadership and team management responsibilities with a variety of work-based scenarios. Such is the impact of the wellbeing service that she delivered more than 850 individual counselling and support sessions for NTH Solutions colleagues in 2024 alone.



Pictured: NTH Solutions wellbeing lead Kerry Storey with hospital chaplain and Schwartz Round facilitator Jim Wright.



Pictured: Emily Hough supports expectant mothers with their vaccinations.

New nurse role supporting pregnant women with vaccinations

A new nurse role is helping support and advise women in Teesside about the benefit of vaccinations during pregnancy.

Emily Hough is helping expectant women and their babies as part of her role as antenatal vaccination nurse at North Tees and Hartlepool. Part of Emily's role – the first of its type at the trust – involves advising on three vaccines women can receive during pregnancy.

These vaccines protect against flu, whooping cough and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

Emily said: "My role involves providing women with more information around what vaccines they are eligible to have, at what stage we advise women having these during their pregnancy and discussing benefits and any questions and concerns our women may have.

"It also involves helping talk through any concerns people may have, dispel any misinformation about vaccines and help put any women with anxieties at ease.

"We totally understand any women who may have these feelings – ultimately they are only doing the best for their baby and asking the questions that I can answer."

All of the vaccines are advised to be taken at various stages of pregnancy.

For flu, women are asked between six and 12 weeks into their pregnancy, but can have this at any time. Whooping cough it is advised 16 weeks into pregnancy and for RSV it is 28 weeks into pregnancy.

Emily continues: "These vaccines will protect the health of both our women and their babies.

"This role allows me to take that time to solely discuss with women and their loved ones about vaccines and their benefits, and gives them the time to ask any questions they may have which they may not get time to ask at a general appointment a woman may have with their midwives."

"The role I am in is to empower women to make their own choices based on the advice and support I give. The choice around vaccinations is always that of our women."



My mummy and nana work here



Please keep them safe at work

The NHS has a zero tolerance policy
towards violence against our staff



Caring
Better
Together