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North Tees and Hartlepool
NHS Foundation Trust

anthem



One-stop chest pain service is national first

Our one-stop heart service is the first of its kind in the country and is already being praised by patients - *Read more on page 3*

Also in this issue:

Cancer team recognised with national award

Success for Hartlepool's surgical hub

Celebrating our nurses and midwives



Dear colleagues,

Welcome to your summer edition of Anthem magazine.

It has now been nearly six months since I started in post as group chief executive – one of the most satisfying stages of my career so far.

On a personal note, I have relocated to the area, moving into a new home and new community and enjoying all that has brought with it.

When it comes to my role here leading University Hospitals Tees, comprising North Tees and Hartlepool and South Tees Hospitals, there have been plenty of challenges and achievements to date.

We have formed a group board which will lead the two trusts so that we can care for our communities in the best possible way.

Our new strapline – Caring Better Together – adds further meaning to what and how we deliver for our patients, our communities and of course our staff. I would urge colleagues to keep this at the heart of how you engage with your own teams and those you may now be working with across the group.

I have been out and about across our hospital and community sites to meet with our staff and patients. I

have also added in some virtual ways for staff to meet, which I hope my colleagues have found useful.

What has come across more than anything is the passion people have to ensure healthcare in our area is the very best.

I can assure you I will be doing my absolute best to make sure we lead the way both regionally and nationally.

This magazine is a celebration of the work our staff are doing to help us do this – I hope you enjoy reading it.

And please do share your positive stories for future publications as we continue to work together for our patients.

Many thanks

Stacey Hunter

GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE



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One-stop chest pain service is national first

A man from Hartlepool with chest issues has praised a one-stop heart service – the first of its kind to be run in the country.

A man from Hartlepool with chest issues has praised a one stop heart service – the first of its kind to be run in the country.

After first experiencing chest pain earlier this year, Henry Cassford has been cared for in the rapid access chest pain clinic.

The 69-year old was referred to the service by his GP in April, first having a telephone assessment, followed by a visit to the one stop clinic at the University Hospital of North Tees where he was examined by a nurse practitioner.

He then had a CT scan. Results went to the HeartFlow service which helps clinicians create an effective care plan. These results are also discussed by the service at its weekly multi disciplinary team meeting who discuss treatment options.

Explaining how the issue started, Henry said: “I was walking along Stockton high street when I started experiencing a real tightness in my chest. I went to get it checked out with my GP, who referred me to the cardiology team.

“Since then, I’ve had treatment from NHS staff across hospital sites and at home and am over the moon with the care I’ve had.”

Henry has since been prescribed tablets to help treat the issue. If symptoms continue, he could be referred to The James Cook University Hospital for an invasive coronary angiogram to have a stent (short wire mesh tube) inserted to help keep the arteries open.

As part of the clinic, patients like Henry can also be cared for by the community heart disease team for home rehabilitation and medication support – with nurse-led meetings held weekly to pick up patients needing further care.

Henry has since had follow up care from the community team and appointments with the cardiology team at the University Hospital of Hartlepool near to his home.

Melloney Threlkeld, lead cardiac nurse practitioner, said: “The rapid access chest service has totally transformed in the last two or three years – so much so that we now aim to test patients within two weeks of being referred by their GP”

Lauriann Smith, cardiac nurse practitioner, added: “This is something that may have taken several months to do before we had this service.

“It is a massive change and one which is benefitting patients across the region.”



Pictured: Henry Cassford (second from right) with members of the rapid access chest clinic.

Volunteers treated to thank you evening on special anniversary year



Pictured: Volunteers and staff enjoy the celebration evening.

The annual celebration evening to celebrate our 400-strong group of volunteers was a chance for staff to show their gratitude for everything volunteers do to support them and patients.

This year's evening do at the University Hospital of North Tees included a bucks fizz reception, where volunteers and staff were entertained by keen pianist and member of the catering team, Ray Advabile. They watched a short video presentation showcasing some of the volunteers' highlights and thank you messages from staff.

This was followed by a two course meal, where staff waited on volunteers all evening.

Welcoming our volunteers to the evening's event, group chair Derek Bell said: "I'm here today to say thank you to each and every one of you. You are the important people in the room today.

"You make a huge contribution in helping to support fellow colleagues and patients and you work with such passion

and dedication. You are exemplars in care and compassion and we are immensely grateful for you giving your time to volunteer."

The evening also celebrated some of our longest serving members, with 41 volunteers reaching important milestones this year, ranging from five year to 50 year awards. Certificates and long service badges were presented by Derek and group chief executive Stacey Hunter to the volunteers in attendance.

Thinking about volunteering?

If you are interested and would like to find out more about volunteering at the Trust, call 01642 383933 or email: nth.tr.volunteersnth@nhs.net

Children of NHS staff plead 'keep mummy and daddy safe at work' – with 32% rise in violent attacks

"My mummy is a doctor – please keep her safe at work", eight-year-old Faye Michie is pleading with the region of Teesside to stop violent attacks against staff in hospitals.

Her mum, Louise Michie works for University Hospitals Tees – which includes South Tees Hospitals and North Tees and Hartlepool trusts. The group reported a 32% increase in attacks in the last 12 months.

More than 800 members of staff from across the two trusts experienced some form of assault from patients, relatives or the public.

The trusts have launched a violence against staff campaign featuring emotive messages from the children and grandchildren of its staff on posters, social media and a range of other channels.

The campaign showcases images of children in a diverse range of job roles including radiographers, security officers, pharmacy technicians, surgeons, nurses and midwives.

Louise Michie, consultant obstetrician for South Tees Hospitals was eager for her daughter Faye and son Logan, aged 10 to take part.

She said: "All NHS workers have the right to feel safe at work to allow them to provide the best possible care to our patients. The campaign is incredibly important as it highlights the message that violent attacks against our staff will not be tolerated.

Carley Wilson, scrub nurse at North Tees and Hartlepool, didn't think twice about involving her daughters Isla, aged 12, and Nevaeh, aged 10, in the hard-hitting campaign.

She said: "This campaign is very important to me. I have been a nurse for 15 years now and love doing my job and helping patients. It is not appropriate to receive violence and aggression when we are here to help people.

Rachael Metcalf, group chief people officer for University Hospitals Tees, added: "This campaign really highlights how our workforce feel, through real voices.

"Importantly this project is ultimately about sending the message that no matter the role or the person, violence and aggression towards our staff is never acceptable.

"All NHS workers have the right to feel safe at work to allow them to provide the best possible care to our patients"



Pictured: Faye Michie.



Pictured: (Left to right) Isla and Nevaeh.



Pictured: Members of the haematology team and some of the patients.

Cancer team recognised with national award

A health team who care for people with cancer has scooped a national award for its commitment to patients living with incurable blood cancer.

The haematology team at the University Hospital of North Tees was presented with the Myeloma UK clinical service excellence programme (CSEP) award. This recognises the services' outstanding care and dedication to patients with myeloma, an incurable blood cancer which claims the lives of 3,000 people in the UK each year.

Staff were praised for their efforts to improve patients' quality of life and eagerness to listen to their needs.

The accolade, awarded by blood cancer charity Myeloma UK, recognises hospitals' commitment to raising the bar for treatment and providing compassionate care.

Kerry Watson, Macmillan lead haematology nurse specialist at the Trust, said: "We feel very proud. We are a small team here at North Tees and Hartlepool and really feel honoured to have received this award. Thank you to all members of the team, without whom we would not be able to deliver the excellent care which has now been recognised."

Myeloma is especially hard to spot as the symptoms are often vague and dismissed as ageing or other minor conditions. By the time many patients are diagnosed, their cancer has often advanced and they require urgent treatment. This can significantly impact their chances of survival and quality of life.

Pauline Stephenson, from Hartburn, discovered she had myeloma back in 2019, after experiencing severe back pain for close to nine months and being initially misdiagnosed with osteoporosis.

Five years on, the 75-year-old grandmother continues to defy the odds and she has thanked the team for supporting her through the rollercoaster of cancer treatment.

Pauline said: To be told you have something that won't go away was hard but they've all been there for me every step of the way.

"My nurse Kerry was there from day one. She always rings me after my bloods have been done to check that everything is OK. I can ring her any time if I have a query.

"They're helping me live the life I want. I'm very thankful for them and for my family."



Pictured: (Left to right) Pauline Stephenson, a patient, specialist nurse Kerry Watson and consultant haematologist Ni Ni Aung.

T Level students – our healthcare professionals of the future

The Trust has been showcasing just a few of its T Level students over the past few months – in a bid to share just one of the ways you can train your way into a career in healthcare.

Through partnership working with Hartlepool College of Further Education, Hartlepool Sixth Form College and Stockton Riverside College, we have been able to celebrate some of our amazing T Level students and share their experience on placement with the Trust so far.

[Find out more about T Levels](#)

The full case studies for each of our students and further information on T Levels can be found online at: www.nth.nhs.uk/careers/recruitment/t-levels

Read some of the responses from our amazing healthcare professionals of the future:

Tell us a little bit about your T Level Experience so far...

Faye Howells, T Level student at Hartlepool College of Further Education, said: "My T Level experience so far has been amazing, and I have loved every second of placement.

"When I was at Billingham Health Centre, we visited chronic obstructive pulmonary disease patients in their own homes and checked up on them by doing their blood pressure, heart rate, oxygen levels and pulse rate. The nurse I was allocated to on the day would supervise me in taking most of the observations. I had already practised these at college so I knew how to do it and this was explained to me again while on placement. We saw eight patients a day – every patient was different and lived in completely different environments.

"After we had seen our patients for the day, we would go back to the base and the nurse would type up patient notes. She would explain to me what she was doing and why throughout the process.

"I have learnt many things on placement that has fed into my college work. For example, communication skills is a topic on our course and you're able to put this into practice on placement."

What have you liked about your time on placement at the Trust?

Maisie Theobald, T Level student at Hartlepool Sixth Form College, said: "I have enjoyed getting to know the healthcare professionals and having the chance to ask them questions that I had about getting into the role, how they got to where they are in their careers and what it was like to work towards the position they're in. This made me feel a lot more relaxed about my worries on wanting to aim to be a nurse in the future.

"I also enjoyed being able to adapt my communication skills. I learnt that each patient has a different need and learnt different ways to complete a patient's task – to provide person centred care."

Is there a reason you wanted to pursue a career in healthcare?

Loretta Modica, T Level student at Stockton Riverside College, said: "I am a young mum to an amazing little boy. As soon as he entered the world I knew I wanted to do something to make him proud. I want to pursue a career in healthcare to become a role model for him and to better myself as a person. Helping people brings me great happiness, and a career in health would allow me to do this whilst giving back to the community."



Pictured: Faye Howells, Hartlepool College of Further Education.



Pictured: Maisie Theobald, Hartlepool Sixth Form.



Pictured: Loretta Modica, Stockton Riverside College.

Praise for new Hartlepool surgical hub – as it marks its first few months since launch

A man from Hartlepool who has been treated in his local hospital's new surgical hub has praised the service – as it marks the first few months since its launch.

Douglas Buchanan is one of many patients treated over the last few months at the University Hospital of Hartlepool since it was accredited by NHS England.

The 81-year old had hip surgery in the centre, which was given surgical hub status last year so it can increase surgical capacity and offer patients quicker access to non-urgent operations.

This includes orthopaedic operations such as hip and knee replacements as well as gynaecology, surgical and breast procedures.

Douglas said: "I found that from pre-assessment clinics to procurement of home aids, from the access lounge staff who put me at ease, to the anaesthetic injection through the operation itself and then the recovery ward team – the whole process ran like clockwork.

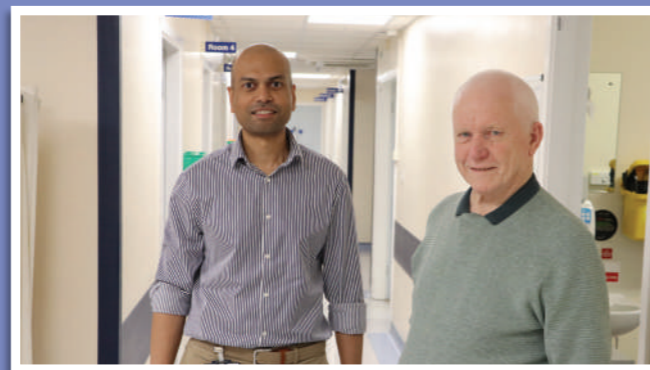
"I then spent a day on the elective ward where the cleaners, catering staff, healthcare assistants, nurses and physios could not do enough for me.

"I was discharged the next day on time with walking aids and medication. Since then I've had my wound checked at hospital and had visits from occupational therapists to make sure my exercises were on track."

Surgical hubs are separate from emergency services, meaning beds kept free for patients waiting for planned operations.

Richard Jeavons, clinical director for orthopaedics, said: "The positive experiences of local people like Douglas are exactly why we needed surgical hub status in Hartlepool.

"Our team here in the hospital is able to focus on treating patients who need this planned surgery, reducing the risk of short notice cancellations during busy periods across the organisation."



Pictured: Douglas Buchanan (right) with consultant surgeon Manju Ramappa.

Team playing 'pivotal' role in surgical hub success

The specialist nurses in the homeward team support patients having a planned operation in the surgical hub at the University Hospital of Hartlepool.

Before surgery the team hold weekly group education classes for patients, hold face to-face clinic appointments and prescribe medications.

When patients are discharged from hospital after surgery, the team follow-up with them after two weeks. They also hold face to-face reviews after six to eight weeks, a five month telephone review and a one year review.

Leeann Thomson, joint replacement specialist nurse, said: "The team is here for patients both before and after surgery – to prepare them for their operation but also make sure they are ready for when they go home after.

As well as that, we have a 24-hour helpline for any patient or family member who needs our support.



Pictured: (Left to right) Joint replacement nurses Girlie Beltran, Antonia Henderson and Leeann Thomson.

"We have found that support from the early stages has had a positive impact on the expectations patients may have and has meant they make a quicker recovery from surgery."

Lindsey Wallace, care group director for collaborative care, said: "The homeward team is pivotal in the way the surgical hub has run in Hartlepool. Without them we wouldn't be able to provide the level of care we do to our patients."

NHS staff offered health and wellbeing support as part of special project

A range of activities have been arranged for staff over the course of the year – as part of an initiative to extend staff health and wellbeing support.

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has organised a number of sporting events and exercise programmes as part of a new improvement project called 'NTH Motivate'.

Helen Waller, health and wellbeing advisor, has been part of the group – who have collectively organised activities including walking challenges and a range of HIIT fitness programme classes in Stockton and Hartlepool.

NTH Motivate is also offering a workplace weight management programme for staff, with wellbeing mentors supporting departments with weekly weigh-ins and guidance on healthy eating.

Helen said: "The proposal for the weight management programme was in direct response to the staff survey results – and we were fortunate enough to obtain funding from the growing occupational health programme the Trust is involved in. This allowed us to provide a good range of initiatives and exercise classes at an affordable cost.

"The connection between exercise, healthy living and good wellbeing are well known. We know what we should be doing but this programme will hopefully inspire staff in the right direction.

"I would encourage staff to have a look at what we have arranged and please give something a try if you can – you won't regret it. If anyone has any questions about anything at all, I am available to chat."

If staff are self-motivated and would like to get involved, there is a 'Self Health' station in the Rainbow Rooms at University Hospital of North Tees and University Hospital of Hartlepool with the equipment and literature to complete the weight management programme.

To find out more about the sessions taking place, or for support staff can get in touch with the occupational health team at: nth-tr.occhealth-hwsupport@nhs.net



Pictured: Health and wellbeing advisor, Helen Waller, has led on NTH Motivate for Trust staff.

West wing teams set to benefit from new rest and recharge room

Work has begun to build a new staff welfare facility in west wing at the University Hospital of North Tees.

The new rest and recharge hub will provide a much needed break out space for staff and volunteers – housing a kitchenette area, seating, a TV and hand washing facilities.

Chloe Jackson, staff nurse on ward 40, is looking forward to the grand opening of the new facility this autumn. She said: "Everybody is so, so excited about the new hub. I think we were all under the impression that it was going to happen in 2030 so we are over the moon that it's opening in October.

"Speaking for myself, I have ADHD, and it can be quite overstimulating taking a break in the staff rooms on the wards. So I'm thrilled to have a quiet space away from the noise and busyness of the wards.

"Everyone on ward 40 is talking about it, and I'm sure they are on the other wards in west wing as well. We are so grateful and we can't thank the charity enough."

The project began life when fundraising coordinator Suzi Campbell supported wards 41 and 42 with their lunch

round during a busy shift. It comes after North Tees and Hartlepool Together's successful bid for money from the national NHS charity, NHS Charities Together.

Suzi said: "It started when I popped down to the wards to give a helping hand. I was talking with the staff and they all spoke about how beneficial it would be to have a rest space away from clinical areas.

"It's such an honour to be able to support our colleagues in west wing with this project and we can't wait to see the finished results."

The project will be funded off the back of money that was raised for NHS Charities Together through the fundraising efforts of the late Captain Sir Thomas Moore. Construction work is being carried out by Geoffrey Robinson Ltd. and Manor Grange Construction Ltd. Work is expected to be complete in mid-October.



Pictured: Nurse Chloe and members of the construction crew on the rest rooms site.

Thank you to our generous donors

We're very grateful for the generosity of our local community who put their time and kindness into donating to our Trust. This support allows us to fund projects and services above and beyond what the NHS can offer.



Pictured: Jackie (centre right) and her colleague Jackie (left) with members of the breast screening team.

The League of Friends supporting our patients

A group of volunteers who run a small coffee shop in the University Hospital of North Tees continue to make generous donations to the hospital.

The League of Friends coffee shop's latest donation was a generous selection of toys to our children's ward to help make hospital stays a little easier for our younger patients.

Volunteers in the coffee shop serve refreshments and snacks from the west wing of the University Hospital of North Tees and all proceeds are generously donated to the Trust. Other recent donations include garden furniture to benefit elderly care patients and white goods for staff rest rooms.

The League of Friends shop is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.



Pictured: The League of Friends with staff on the children's ward.



Pictured: Joanne Nielson (pictured centre) gifted the equipment to members of the paediatric physiotherapy team.

Norton bar donates specialist physiotherapy plate

Members of the paediatric physiotherapy team at the Trust would like to say a huge thank you for the donation of a Hypervibe vibration plate.

The team was overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of Joanne and James Nielson and the community of Hydes Bar Norton, who fundraised for and purchased the plate for the department.

Joanne and James' grandson receives regular physiotherapy support and wanted to donate a piece of equipment that would benefit not only him – but other children within the local community as well.

Though the positive research around the benefits of vibration plates continues to grow, the new piece of equipment should assist in the reduction of muscle tone and improving muscle strength, flexibility and balance – helping children with long term neurological conditions to improve physically and muscle functionality.



Pictured: Hop on board the roadshow bus to get involved in innovation.



Pictured: The NTH Solutions team are bringing innovations to locations across University Hospitals Tees.

Get on board with innovation

Innovation isn't just about ground-breaking ideas; it's about meaningful conversations and asking the right questions.

Three months into her new role as an innovations co-ordinator, Kara Pickering talks about the importance of engaging with staff and the power of dialogue in driving positive change.

Kara: These initial months have been a whirlwind of learning and discovery. From delving into the intricacies of intellectual property to meeting inspiring individuals both inside our organisation and externally, every encounter has been eye opening.

I've learned that every innovation journey begins with three fundamental questions:

- What problem are we trying to solve?
- How can our team contribute and support?
- Will it ultimately benefit our patients, improve efficiency, or generate revenue to reinvest into frontline care?

A significant aspect of my role involves leading on engagement and events management. I am thrilled to

be leading on the University Hospitals Tees innovation roadshow which launched in July and welcomed chief executive Stacey Hunter and chairman Derek Bell at the roadshow launch on all four hospital sites.

The bus themed roadshow will journey to different locations within our group each month, setting the stage for staff members to hop on board and share their ground-breaking ideas.

Whether you're based at North Tees and Hartlepool or South Tees Hospitals, our roadshow will come knocking at your door, providing easy access for all staff members to engage and participate.

We welcome your input, feedback and ideas as we strive to make a difference together - contact us with any ideas on nth_tr.innovations@nhs.net

Meet some of the NHS staff behind exciting new town centre health facility

Staff involved in a new town health centre are highlighting some of the health issues they will be treating ahead of the service's planned opening later this year.



The health professionals who will be working at the community diagnostic centre in Stockton will be in specialties including radiology, cardiology, respiratory and phlebotomy.

Staff will carry out checks, tests and scans from the new High Street building for a range of issues including cancer, lung disease and heart disease.

University Hospitals Tees, comprising of North Tees and Hartlepool and South Tees Hospitals trusts, will jointly run the service.

A number of profiles have been shared on hoardings around the site, which is currently under construction after building works started in September last year.

We welcome your input, feedback and ideas as we strive to make a difference together - contact us with any ideas on nth-tr.innovations@nhs.net



Pictured: Some of the staff who will be working in the diagnostic centre.

Building works progressing

Since then, contractor Kier has made significant progress, with works set to be complete later this year.

Phil Woolfall, clinical director for radiology at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, said: "The centre will include a range of really skilled and experienced health professionals - something we are hoping this campaign will help highlight to our community."

"Over the coming months, people in the local area will have quicker access to scans, tests and health checks."

The site will provide a number of diagnostic functions including MRI scans, CT scans, ultrasound scans, cardiology, X rays, blood tests and respiratory checks.

The centre sits on the southern end of a wider transformation of the waterfront led by Stockton Borough Council, which will include an urban park for community events.



Pictured: Community nurses gather for retirement.



Pictured: Anne Bagley after qualifying to be a nurse.

The “really inspirational” nurse who led on new way of caring for patients

A nurse in Hartlepool who helped pioneer a new way of caring for patients in care homes has retired after more than four decades in the NHS.

Anne Bagley has worked as a community matron at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust for 20 years.

Anne, who lives in Seaham, was one of the first nurse practitioners in the region to work directly with care homes to help give patients the best care.

Speaking about her colleague, community nursing lead Lynn Morgan said: “Anne was one of the first group of nurses to work closely with care homes to support them.

“It was really inspirational – she set off a new way of working with care homes which is still in practice today and seen as a real service of excellence. I remember being quite in awe of Anne during this time for the work she did.

“She had a wonderful career caring for patients from babies, to adults and the elderly. Her wealth of experience and support will be greatly missed by myself and all of the team, including staff and residents within the care homes.”

Anne has worked for more than 41 years in community in various health trusts across the region, caring for a wide range of patients.

She said: “I have had a fantastic career – I have always wanted to do the best for my patients and have made some wonderful friends along the way.

“I want to thank all of my colleagues for their support over the years.”

Heart scan service recognised for “world-leading” patient care

Staff have been recognised for the “world-leading” heart scan service they are delivering for patients.

The cardiac CT scanning team has won an award for image quality from medical technology experts HeartFlow – for the number of improvements led by teamwork between the cardiology and radiology services.

Gail Griffiths, diagnostic services lead, said: “The service is the result of fantastic collaboration between our different teams in radiology and cardiology. Our teams work closely together so that a patient is prepared effectively for their CT scan so we can produce the best possible images.

“It is testament to the work of the whole team, everything they do is focussed on improving each patient’s experience in our care.”

The service has been highlighted for the way cardiac nurses refer patients into the CT service as well as the way radiographers look to constantly improve the quality of the scans produced.

Lorraine Hollings, specialist radiographer, said: “We are so proud to have been recognised with this award.

“The CT cardiac radiographers are committed to constantly improving the quality of the cardiac scan so any movement of the heart is reduced during a scan.

This is achieved through various imaging techniques and by lowering a patient’s heartrate with the use of beta blockers administered by the cardiology nurses.

“Taking into consideration a patient’s full medical background, the cardiac nurses also refer many patients into the rapid access chest pain clinic service following initial triage consultations. The patients are then given the results of their scan and a treatment plan before they leave.”

Two members of the HeartFlow service, Simon Cliffe and Nav Sadiq, visited the team at the University Hospital of North Tees to present them with a special plaque.

Nav Sadiq, regional manager, said: “This award is real testament to the staff in this service – the collaboration between the cardiac and CT team is unbelievable.

“What the team has done to shorten the patient pathway is fantastic – there really is nothing else like it that we have seen anywhere else. It is world leading.

“The team in cardiology are prepping the patients and there is such good cohesion between cardiology and radiology.”



Pictured: Members from HeartFlow present the award to our cardiac CT scanning team.

Research and innovation leads the way in respiratory and pain medicine

Research and innovation is key in our Trust and we would like to highlight three projects helping our patients breathe a little easier.

Reducing pneumonia with pain medication

Using pain relief to prevent pneumonia may not be an obvious course of action but a team of specially trained medics at the Trust are finding increasing success with this unusual approach.

Most people recognise that pneumonia (chest infection) presents a real risk to life. What many people don't realise is that a broken rib can lead to pneumonia.

The simple act of coughing helps clear the lungs and reduces the chances of pneumonia – but the pain of a broken rib can be so severe that it prevents coughing and increases the risk of deadly infection.

Consultant anaesthetist Tariq Azad said: "We formed a small team of anaesthetists who are specialists in providing regional anaesthesia to provide pain relief to these patients – thus reducing the risk of pneumonia and critical care admission.

"This pain relief allows the patient to cough freely, clearing their lungs as well as deep breathing. This keeps pneumonia at bay and helps in the healing process."

Dr Subramani Diwakar continued: "So far we have been successful in treating more than 50 patients with the pain relief and reducing the risk of them developing pneumonia. This has been very successful and we are planning to expand this service for patients with broken hips."



Pictured: Anaesthetists with the ultrasound scanner used to locate the precise service to administer pain relief.

Improving treatment for people with pleural disease

Pleural disease - fluid gathering around the lungs – can be a common complication of cancer and can cause significant breathlessness and discomfort to patients.

Traditional treatments usually result in a prolonged hospital stay with no guarantee of success.

Now, Dr. Kevin Conroy is working with colleagues at Newcastle-upon Tyne Hospitals and Northumbria Healthcare trusts to develop a solution to avoid the distress of a drainage tube being emptied several times a week or an unnecessary hospital stay.

Dr Conroy said: "Our research project lets a patient have a temporary drain and the talcum powder treatment as an outpatient – hopefully giving them the advantage of this treatment but also letting them sleep in their own bed."

The research project, funded by Tees Valley Research Alliance, will take a year to be complete.



Pictured: Dr. Kevin Conroy.



Pictured: Dr. Elizabeth Clark screens suitable patients for the ASPECT trial.

The impact of aspirin after hospitalisation with pneumonia

The Trust took part in a national trial to assess the impact of patients taking aspirin after pneumonia. The trial looks at the everyday drug's effectiveness in reducing the risk of heart attack or stroke – common after-effects of pneumonia in people over 50.

Dr. Elizabeth Clark has been involved in screening suitable patients for the project called ASPECT – Aspirin after hospitalisation with Pneumonia to prevent cardiovascular Events randomised Controlled Trial.

Elizabeth said: "The research leaders believe that if the project shows that aspirin is effective, it could prevent some 3,000 heart attacks and strokes every year.

"All the patients on the trial need to do is take a low dose of aspirin every day for three months. We keep in touch with them, take notes and feed it back to the national research team."

A day in the life of... an EAU nurse practitioner

After 25 years working in retail, Adam Breen took a detour in life and decided to change up his career for something more meaningful.

After completing his nursing degree seven years ago, Adam, now 51 from Ingleby Barwick, has worked his way up the ranks to become a nurse practitioner. He has worked in the emergency assessment unit (EAU) at the University Hospital of North Tees for over seven years now.

What led you to become a nurse on EAU?

I worked in various retail spaces since leaving higher education, including 15 years as an award winning shop manager. Ten years ago, I decided to make a detour in my career and started my degree in nursing.

As a third year student, I spent three months on placement in the EAU. During this time, I was offered a job as a newly qualified nurse. The intention was to get a grounding on the unit and then move into a different area.

I've been a qualified nurse for seven years now – all seven on EAU.

How was the move from retail to nursing?

It might seem like a drastic change in career but at the end of the day, both of my careers have been a point of service – people who were once called customers are now called patients. Both have a need, you ask questions, you find a solution and then you provide them with that solution.

One of the greatest skills I have brought from my time in retail is the ability to quickly build rapport with people, building trust and the ability to identify needs through questioning techniques.

If this is done in an engaging and empathetic way, outcomes are ultimately positive and the patient (or customer) has a good experience.

What does your role as nurse practitioner on EAU involve?

Each shift starts with a handover where we'll discuss patients who have been poorly over the last 12 hours. This gives everyone an understanding of each patient's needs in EAU.

My position as a nurse practitioner is really multifunctional – it's a bridging gap between the nursing staff and the doctors.

My role is to clerk patients, mainly in the initial assessment area – we take patients from local GP practices, the ambulance service, NHS 111 and our colleagues over in urgent care. I assess each patient, provide an impression to a senior doctor, then qualify the patient for discharge, outpatient treatment or admit them as a hospital inpatient.

What do you love about working on EAU?

I'll rewind to 12 years ago when I decided to change my career path. I became bored – some may even say stale. My work became an endless cycle of repetition.

EAU is fast paced and your time with a patient is critical to their care and treatment. And, due to the nature of the ward, you're exposed to a wide range of medical disciplines and nursing specialties.

You're constantly gaining knowledge and growing as an individual. EAU is a place where you can build a solid reputation and clinical education to build the career you want.

No day, hour or minute is the same – there's always a new challenge to learn from. It is nigh on impossible to become bored or stale in my role.



Pictured: Adam left retail to become a nurse 12 years ago and has worked on our EAU ever since.



Pictured: Colleagues from across University Hospitals Tees came together for the first annual safeguarding conference.

Hospital group celebrates first annual safeguarding conference

Trusts within University Hospitals Tees recently came together to support group learning around safeguarding in the Tees Valley.

North Tees and Hartlepool and South Tees Hospitals trusts held their first group annual safeguarding conference in spring at Hardwick Hall Hotel in Durham.

Healthcare professionals from across the hospital group came together to collaborate on safeguarding, explore the subject and further understand the impact of exploitation on safeguarding services across the Tees Valley.

It examined recent case studies, showcased best practice and offered opportunities for healthcare staff to enhance their professional curiosity. Attendees learned more about local and national trends and how life can look for vulnerable victims.

Jenny Duthie, adult specialist nurse at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, said: "It was a really great day. It was fantastic to see so many

people taking part and all the discussions happening around the tables. The presentations and the speakers were unreal – really thought-provoking and even as a practitioner I learned so much that I didn't know."

The pioneering conference also discussed ways to build and maintain resilience when working in increasingly challenging environments and improving engagement and outcomes for the patients we serve.

Lindsay Britton-Robertson, assistant director of nursing in safeguarding at South Tees Hospitals, said: "We have got so much more complex cases, especially since COVID-19. Being able to equip our staff with all of the different strands of safeguarding feels really challenging at times, but we hope we are delivering the key messages and are visible."



Pictured: The training uses state-of-the-art manikins, simulation equipment and live actors.

“I am completely confident now in dealing with end of life patients”



Pictured: While two nurses at a time complete the active simulation, the others observe via a live feed.

Trust first in region to deliver simulation training for nurses supporting dying patients

Our palliative care team is the first in the region to develop simulation learning for nurses supporting patients receiving end of life care and their families.

Launched in May 2023, this simulation training aims to support nurses in identifying dying patients, escalating care and supporting the families of those on palliative care pathways.

Clinical nurse specialists in palliative care Roberta Chadbourn and Robyn Willis have worked closely with the Trust’s simulation education team to develop the training. While simulation is primarily used for training doctors and physiotherapists, the two teams identified a gap in the market to support qualified nurses – both in hospital care and community care.

Roberta said: “Just saying the word ‘die’ can be very difficult, even for nurses. It’s human nature to not want to upset people.

“This training is about giving nurses a safe environment to have those discussions, ask questions and figure out the right words to say. It reinforces the care and emotional support that they are already providing, but just gives that bit of extra confidence and some extra tools to have conversations around death and dying.”

Now more than one year on, the training has yielded positive feedback from participating nurses and shows no signs of slowing down – with all sessions for the remainder of 2024 fully booked.

Feedback from a participating nurse reads: “Caring for an end of life patient has always been stressful for me. This session was really informative and after finishing the simulation, I am completely confident now in dealing with end of life patients.”

Robyn said: “This was a total new experience for us and has been a huge learning curve for Roberta and I. It started with a little seed of an idea and we can see how it’s grown. We were going to give it a shot and see if it was beneficial – and it’s been a resounding success.

“One year on, we can see the benefits of sim education in palliative care and now we want to make sure that we’re delivering the very best training that we can.”

Managing appointments at the touch of a button

The Trust’s digital programme and outpatient teams have been hard at work to bring technological systems in line for patients to manage their appointments via the NHS app.

Patients can use the app to request a change to the time or date of an appointment or even cancel it if they need to. The system gives patients more control and reduces the likelihood of missed appointments.

The Trust has added the following services to the app:

- Gastroenterology
- Respiratory medicine
- Urology and gynaecology
- General surgery and clinical haematology
- Gynaecological oncology and pain management
- Diabetic medicine and endocrinology
- Assisted reproduction, general medicine and chemical pathology
- Orthopaedics (including trauma, lower limb, spinal, hand trauma, upper limb and upper limb trauma)
- Rheumatology
- Cardiology

The app can also issue notifications to remind patients about their appointments and has the potential to personalise what information they would like to receive to support their journey.

Head of outpatients and prevention Kath Tarn said: “Choice is always good and the app provides more choice for our patients.

“Being able to manage your appointment at the touch of a button has proven really popular. As well as being a huge benefit to patients, it has helped the Trust by reducing missed appointments by 9%.”

The secure NHS app is free of charge and can be downloaded from either the Google Play or Apple App stores.



Pictured: Outpatient manager Kath Tarn.

Thanking our nurses for everything they do

As part of International Nurses' Day – the day of Florence Nightingale's birthday – the senior nursing team visited nurses across the Trust to thank their colleagues.

Our nurses go above and beyond for our patients, their loves ones and for their colleagues every day. Thank you for all that you do.



Midwives' role in helping the environment

Sunday 5 May marked International Day of the Midwife and there was lots to celebrate across North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust.

From reducing the impact of Entonox on the planet to digitalising records to reduce paper use, this year's theme focused on how midwives are playing their part in tackling the climate crisis.



Pictured: Our Hartlepool midwifery team will soon be working in an eco-friendly ward as part of a £13million project.



Pictured: Our Badgernet maternity records system gives women quick access to their own notes – it is also reducing paper usage at our Trust.



Pictured: Our midwives are working closely with colleagues to reduce the environmental impacts of Entonox – gas and air used as pain relief during birth.

Trust launches new outpatient service for mums-to-be

The Trust has introduced its new 'mechanical induction of labour' service for pregnant women at 41 weeks or those who need an induced labour for other clinical reasons.

The new process induces labour by a process called cervical ripening, performed as an outpatient service. Any woman opting for this procedure will be provided with information and advice, including an electronic leaflet.

Senior clinical matron Hannah Matthews said: "Despite its name, mechanical induction of labour is a very gentle process.

"Research shows this process increases patient satisfaction by offering more choice and reducing the length of a hospital stay. It also reduces invasive examinations and improves the labour experience for women."

The introduction of this new service follows the advice of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

Danielle Stephens, quality, safety and innovation lead for maternity, paediatric and pharmacy services, commented: "We've looked into our records and have learned that 96% of women under our care who were induced over the last year would have been suitable for outpatient induction of labour.

"Going forward, we're confident that this new service will benefit lots of women."



Pictured: Danielle Stephens, quality, safety and innovation lead for maternity, paediatric and pharmacy services and Hannah Matthews senior clinical matron.



Pictured: (Left to right) Group chair Professor Derek Bell OBE, Daniel Wales, Paul Wales, and group managing director Neil Atkinson.

Emotional posthumous long service award presentation for Trust pioneer

Tributes were made during an emotional presentation service of a Trust long service award to the family of a much-missed member of staff.

A key member of our Trust podiatry team since 1996, Louise Wales was one of the first podiatry technicians in the country, assisting with diabetic foot screening and cutting nails. Louise eventually developed callus and simple corn debridement skills as well as working on the production of insoles for patient footwear.

Louise sadly died earlier this year after battling multiple medical conditions, leaving behind a legacy of commitment, excellence and the fond memories of all who knew her.

Group chair Professor Derek Bell OBE and group managing director Neil Atkinson recently met with Louise's husband Paul Wales and their son Daniel to present them with a medal and certificate in recognition of Louise's 35 years of service to the NHS.

Paul said: "Louise was extremely proud that she worked for the NHS. Throughout her illness, she was driven by the thought that one day she would be well enough to return to work. Unfortunately, Louise's illness got the better of her – we miss her so much.

"Daniel and I would like to place on record our thanks for the help and support North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has provided over the last 18 months.

In particular, we thank her colleagues Gary Greenman, Sheree Lyons and the podiatry department.

"It was an honour for us to receive Louise's 35 years long service award."



Pictured: Louise Wales.

NHS support team's success helping clinical services

A team supporting NHS patient services is looking back on the progress to date – just seven years after first being set up.

The specialist services admin hub and the children's services admin hub was formed to support teams across the community.

The service acts as a first point of contact for patients for all new referrals and clinic appointment and outcomes for clinical teams in areas like physiotherapy, community pain management, podiatry, adult and children's speech and language and nutrition and dietetics.

First launched in April 2017, with a team of just two senior admin staff and a small support team, the service has grown and taken on duties traditionally carried out by the clinical teams.

The specialist services admin data activity has increased by nearly three times in as many years – with the team completing more than 500,000 tasks a year.

Rachael Briggs, service manager, said: "From where the service started to where it is now, it is fantastic to see how far it has progressed.

"The service was set up to act as a first point of contact for all patients who have been referred, as well as co-ordination of clinics for all services across both admin hubs. But since then the team has continued to develop, now supporting 19 clinical teams using many different systems."

Among the tasks the team perform are providing reception cover for seven community bases, taking patient calls, managing referrals, audio typing and batch reports, and referral to treatment tracking.

Rachael added: "There are so many other ways the service has evolved – we now have two menopause champions and a wellbeing champion along with NHS ambassadors. We also have a quality improvement lead.

"We strive to support staff with professional courses, including apprenticeships in leadership and management and any other courses staff express an interest in – medical terminology, business administration and so on."

"The specialist services admin data activity has increased by nearly three times"



Pictured: The specialist service admin team completes more than 500,000 tasks a year.

Governors' election update

Governors play a vital role in the development and future direction of a NHS trust.

Elected to represent their local communities, a governor's responsibilities include:

- Reflecting the interests of members and the wider public
- Helping select and appoint the chairman and non executive directors
- Holding the non executive directors to account for the performance of the Trust
- Receiving the Trust's annual report and accounts
- Approving the chief executive's appointment
- Attending council of governors meetings
- Shaping the Trust's membership strategy

Earlier this year, we held a new round of elections for our council of governors and we are proud to announce our new governors.

Representing Stockton on Tees are new governors Patrick Kimmitt, Allan Fletcher, Melanie Fordham and Graham Wynn.

The interests of the Hartlepool area will be served by Misra Bano Mahroo, Allen Kellehear, Anne Holt and Pam Shurmer.

The Trust also welcomes two new governors from within our staff group – Jennifer Jones and Natalie Wintersgill.

Group chair Professor Derek Bell OBE said: "I'd like to welcome our new governors and wish them the best in their new roles.

Being a governor is about standing for your community and representing their interests.

"We want to see people stand for our council of governors from all walks of life. If we are to reflect the community, we need our leadership to represent the community."

The Trust will be holding further elections at the end of September to fill the remaining seats in Stockton, Hartlepool, Sedgefield and three staff vacancies.

Derek continued: "I'd encourage anyone with an interest in their local healthcare provision to consider standing for election. No matter your age, professional background, race, gender or sexuality – you have something to offer."

To find out more about becoming a governor, visit: www.nth.nhs.uk/about/governors



Pictured: Group chair Professor Derek Bell OBE welcomes our new governors.



Pictured: Steph's new role aims to improve staff's experiences at work.

New role to help improve staff experience as part of national initiative

A national NHS initiative to improve the experience of staff is being rolled out at the Trust – with a specialist role created.

Steph Gale's role as the new people promise manager will be to speak to staff and help support their working lives to be the very best they can be.

She said: "I've worked at the Trust for more than 12 years as a nurse and am passionate about making the experience our staff have here the very best.

My role is part of the NHS People Promise to help support, recognise and reward the NHS workforce, by achieving the seven people promise themes.

As an organisation, we can positively impact our culture and make sure the organisation is always a place people want to remain.

The NHS People Promise includes themes about being compassionate and inclusive, recognised and rewarded, safe and healthy, learning, working flexibly and teamwork.

Steph added: "The promise looks at what is important to our people, looking at providing staff with things such as a voice, a team and educational opportunities to continue learning.

"Part of my role so far has been looking at the excellent pieces of work we already do and also the great potential we have from our group working model.

"However it has also provided me with some areas of focus that we need to develop so we are delivering the promise.

Although I've had the opportunity so far to meet and engage with some fantastic teams and colleagues who have all been so supportive and helpful in sharing their knowledge, experience and perspectives, I need to hear from as many staff as possible.

"I'm holding some engagement events to discuss key focus topics and listen to suggestions so that any improvements made can actually impact the teams involved.

"I want to thank everyone for their engagement so far and look forward to meeting many more of you in my new role. I'm passionate about ensuring our staff feel valued, recognised and are rewarded for their hard work.

Specialist palliative care team receives national award for commitment to patient care

Our specialist palliative care team was honoured with this year's Dundas Medal – an accolade for excellence in improving palliative care in hospitals. They were recognised for the extensive development and expansion of the Trust's palliative care service, dating back to the Covid pandemic.

The team has expanded to a seven day service, offering specialist treatment and holistic support to patients with life limiting illnesses and also their loved ones. This service offers specialist assessments, expert advice on controlling pain, and practical and emotional support around planning for the future and maintaining independence.

Donna Wakefield, consultant in palliative medicine, said: "To be awarded the Dundas Medal is such an honour for the team – to be recognised as an example of providing excellent palliative care.

"Everyone has worked really hard with so much enthusiasm and new ideas. The entire service has developed so much within only a few years and that really is down to the collaborative efforts of the whole team."

In addition to actively improving the delivery of palliative and end of life care at the Trust, the team was also recognised for:

- Support to patients and loved ones, including introducing an end of life facilitator and redeveloping the Family's Voice diary
- Supporting patients to be in their preferred place of death

- Innovative simulation training for nurses (read more about this on page 20)
- Wellbeing support for staff, including a collaborative creative writing project with The Open University

Zoe Booth, palliative and end of life care lead, said: "Our team is incredibly proud to have won this award. It goes to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to ensure that patients – and their families, friends and carers – receive the best possible palliative and end of life care."



Pictured: Consultant Donna Wakefield (second from left) and members of the specialist palliative care team receive the Dundas Medal.



Pictured: The specialist palliative care team at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Hospital radio volunteer retires after 40 years

After brightening up the days of local hospital patients for four decades, Norman Johnson has hung up his headphones as he retires from his volunteer role as a radio presenter at Radio Stitch.

Norman, 82, from Stockton, has been a regular voice on Radio Stitch since 1984, spinning records and cheering up patients as they recover on the wards.

Now, the popular host of the 'Thanks for the Memories' show has stepped away from the microphone to enjoy his retirement.

Norman said: "I enjoy music and it's been a lot of fun playing musicians not normally heard on the radio. Some of my favourites are 'Wonderful One' by Ken Griffin and 'La Mer' by Charles Trenet.

"Volunteering at a hospital radio station is a great way to have fun, enjoy good company and hopefully make life a little brighter for patients on the wards. Keeping active and doing my radio show has kept my brain working but I don't think I have another 40 years left in me!

"I'll miss my friends at Radio Stitch, but I'll keep in touch. And I'll definitely listen online every now and then see how they're getting on without me."

Radio Stitch can be enjoyed online at: www.radiostitch.co.uk



Pictured: Norman has retired after 40 years' volunteering at our hospital radio station.





Pictured: Julie Sinclair and Emma Golby.

Success for pilot scheme to reduce hospital admissions from local care homes

The Trust has had incredible success working with local care homes to reduce hospital admissions for older people with diabetes.

The Trust, in partnership with Mckenzie Group Practice who identified the care homes and patients, is mid way through a one year pilot project to train staff in seven local care homes. The training raises care home staff's awareness of the impact low blood sugar (hypoglycaemia) can have on residents which can lead to them being admitted to hospital.

The improved training for care home staff, regular reviews by a specialist diabetes nurse and using new technology, has reduced diabetes related admissions to hospital from 235 combined days in hospital last year to just four this year.

Lead diabetes specialist nurse Julie Sinclair said: "We raised awareness of diabetes related complications such as hypoglycaemia with care home staff by

training them in continuous glucose monitoring, how to recognise various signs and symptoms and to provide simple, initial treatment to keep people safe.

"So far it has been a huge success and has made a big impact in reducing time spent in hospital."

The training was delivered by diabetes nurse Emma Golby. Emma commented: "The care homes have been fantastic and really embraced the training. They have been partners from day one and have truly committed to delivering for their residents."

The proposal was submitted to North East Commissioning services to fund the project for 12 months and is due to end in late September.

Nurse recognised with long service award for services to community nursing

A senior nurse has been recognised with a special Queen's Nursing Institute long service award.

Mel Cabbage, who has been a nurse for more than 25 years, was presented with the award – which recognises long-serving community nurses.

It comes after Mel won the Queen's Nurse Award four years ago, which recognised her work caring for patients as a district nurse.

Mel has shared that it was the care shown by a nurse mentor during her training that inspired her to continue a career in nursing.

She said: "If it wasn't for a district nursing sister named Maureen, who I was allocated to in my second student placement, I would not have continued in nursing.

"She was an inspiration and demonstrated to me how to holistically care for a patient and their families and carers in their own home.

"Maureen and her philosophy of 'home is best for those who can' has always stayed with me and has ensured that my community nursing foundations remain true to this concept."

Helping develop nursing careers

Mel, who is the Trust's associate director of nursing experience and improvement, has developed the role of practice development leads in the district nursing service.

She added: "This role ensures all staff new to community nursing have the opportunity to have both group and one to one support to develop the skills to fulfil the role.

"Not only has this helped build competence and confidence within the service but it also supports retention of staff, particularly those in preceptorship periods.

"As a qualified professional nurse advocate I am also able to offer wider support to nursing colleagues across community nursing services to provide support with restorative supervision, discussions around quality improvement ideas and supporting career conversations."


Mel has also supported the district nursing sisters to develop an in reach service into the hospital and allowing them to be discharged home safely as soon as they are medically fit to do so.



Pictured: Mel Cabbage was awarded a certificate and badge from the Queen's Nursing Institute.



My grandma is a matron



Please keep her safe at work

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



Caring
Better
Together