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North Tees and Hartlepool
NHS Foundation Trust

anthem



Artwork donated in memory of baby Angelo

New artwork from Mackenzie Thorpe is unveiled at the University Hospital of North Tees to pay tribute to a local family and their son. Read more on page 4.

Also in this issue:

Women's health physio named apprentice of the year

Healing Janice's heart from her own living room

Works complete on £6.5M operating theatre project



Dear reader,

Welcome to the latest edition of Anthem.

As we head into spring let me take this opportunity to thank our staff for their continued hard work and dedication over the busy winter months. The passion, commitment and enthusiasm I see across all our teams never ceases to amaze me.

Like all NHS trusts across the country, we know we are facing real challenges – from reducing waiting lists to balancing the books. But we also know there are lots of fantastic things going on across all our services and departments that we want to shout about from the roof tops.

This edition shines the spotlight on our award-winning cardiac remote monitoring service which supports patients with heart failure to manage their condition in the comfort of their own home. To find out more, jump to page 10 where Janice Oliver invites us into her home and shares the benefits of this fantastic remote monitoring service.

We also celebrate the impact of digital technology, having been nominated for no less than five national Health Service Journal (HSJ) digital awards. From electronic patient records to virtual wards, these technologies enable patients to receive high quality care in more flexible and convenient ways.

The key to success has been the shared vision and the collaborative working between our clinical and digital teams right across University Hospitals Tees and it's great to see this is now starting to free up more time for clinicians to focus on what matters most – caring for our patients. Turn to page 8 to discover more.

Another great success story is our emergency department testing programme which has detected hundreds of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) which would have otherwise gone untreated. The James Cook University Hospital was the first in England to launch syphilis screening for adults aged between 19 and 70 who are already having their blood sampled at A&E. The scheme has been so successful that we have now extended it to the University Hospital of North Tees as well. You can read more on page 11.

Please do share your stories with us and we will look to include as many as we can in future issues and across our wide range of communication channels.

We'd especially love to hear from teams who have found innovative ways to improve efficiency, productivity and collaborative working so we can share successful ideas across the group.

Thanks for reading.

Stacey Hunter

GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Keep up-to-date with University Hospitals Tees

From career stories to innovations in patient care and more, follow University Hospitals Tees on social media to keep up with the latest news.

 LinkedIn: University Hospitals Tees

 TikTok: @UniversityHospitalsTees

 Instagram: @NorthTeesAndHartlepoolNHSFT

Works complete on £6.5M operating theatre project at the University Hospital of North Tees

A long-term project to upgrade robotic and emergency maternity surgery spaces at the University Hospital of North Tees is now complete.

Works began in February 2024 to build a robotic surgery theatre with an adjacent training room and a new emergency maternity theatre and recovery space.

The first phase of the works, which created the new theatres by building on the space above an atrium, was completed in April 2025.

The design and development team were straight back to work and have now completed the final phase of the works which include a new 11-bed recovery space for post operative patients, staff changing rooms, staff room, toilets, storage areas and an access corridor.

Alison Coates, senior operations manager, said: "The plan involved building an entirely new section one floor above ground level to bridge a gap over a courtyard. To say it was ambitious is an understatement."

NTH Solutions' design and development manager Jordan Pearson commented: "We work hand-in-hand with clinical colleagues to disrupt services as little as possible and make sure our end product will serve our patients."

Consultant surgeon Anil Agarwal said: "On behalf of the project management team I would like to thank all our theatre staff for their support during the building



The Da Vinci robot.

works and our colleagues who contributed to the design and planning.

"Patients are already benefitting from the new operating theatres and now patient care and flow will improve with the new recovery area. The new facilities will give theatre staff a better working environment."



Alison Coates, senior operations manager, design and development manager Jordan Pearson and consultant surgeon Anil Agarwal.

New artwork from acclaimed artist to pay tribute to baby Angelo and other bereaved families

A family from Teesside and a well-known Middlesbrough born artist have unveiled a special commissioned artwork at the University Hospital of North Tees, to support parents experiencing the loss of a baby following the passing of their own son Angelo.

Parents Alice and Michael Miles, who live in Nunthorpe, were at the unveiling, alongside Angelo's grandparents and sister Elle Smith, who is also a midwife at the organisation. The event saw the new commissioned artwork officially unveiled by internationally acclaimed artist Mackenzie Thorpe.

Representatives from the organisation's arts council, chair Professor Derek Bell, charity 4Louis and hospital staff involved in Angelo's care also attended.

Angelo's story

Alice and Michael, along with big brother Massimo and family, welcomed little Angelo on 6 July 2025.

However, complications that occurred just two weeks before Alice's due date – described by the family as a 'one-in-a-million chance' – meant that Angelo was born early and lived for 59 precious minutes.

The family were moved to the Snowdrop Suite, at North Tees, where they were able to spend some quiet moments together with Angelo, making memories and sharing many cuddles.

A memory box donated by baby loss charity 4Louis contained two small knitted blue hearts. Both hearts were held by Angelo, and kept with him right up until the day of his funeral. Afterwards, Mam and Dad kept one of these hearts and Angelo kept the other – an emotional bond to maintain a real connection to Angelo.

In the corridor outside of the snowdrop suite, the family also came across a special framed poem called 'little snowdrops'. It offered a message that brought unexpected comfort and peace.



Mackenzie Thorpe and parents Alice and Michael, with their sister and some of the maternity staff involved in Angelo's care.



(Left to right) Michael and Alice Miles (Angelo's parents) with Paula Parnaby and Bob McGurrell from baby loss charity 4Louis.

A moving tribute

Angelo's grandad Andrew Smith (Pops) said: "We knew we wanted to help other families who may suffer the heartbreak of similar circumstance and to find a way to commemorate Angelo.

"I remembered how deeply the work of Mackenzie Thorpe resonated with me, so we reached out in the hope that Mackenzie may consider a commission. And thankfully, it was a yes."

The pastel artwork will take pride of place next to the Snowdrop Suite poem that helped to inspire the commission. The design incorporates two central figures, two blue hearts and rainbows - symbols that speak deeply to many families who have experienced baby loss.

Alongside commissioning the artwork, the family also raised funds for 4Louis, the charity that supported them following Angelo's passing. Through donations and fundraising, including a sponsored Middlesbrough 10k run, they have raised £7,000 to help other bereaved families receive memory boxes and knitted hearts - the very same hearts that still mean so much to them.

Artist Mackenzie Thorpe, said: "I'm the oldest of seven siblings and my youngest brother Robin, died at just 15-days old. Nobody goes away - I remember it to this day and he still has an impact on my artwork.

"Angelo and Robin, they left, but they have left a lasting impression. I wanted to be able to share my response to his story and reflect how our loved ones, no matter how long they are with us, can leave a lasting impression on our lives."

During the unveiling, the family also expressed heartfelt thanks to the maternity staff on shift the day Angelo was born, describing them as 'fantastic and so supportive.'

Angelo's purpose

Andrew continues: "It has felt as though this artwork was meant to be created and we are so grateful to Mackenzie and his family for agreeing to take on the commission. We're also so grateful to 4Louis whose memory box made such a huge difference in helping us to create precious memories with Angelo.

"That's ultimately what we wanted - to create something that might lift other families during a time of overwhelming pain, even if only for a moment."



The artwork in situ on the Snowdrop Suite.

Patients share experience being cared for in surgical centre – as part of special visit

“The care has been beyond my expectations” – that’s the feedback from patients at a hospital’s surgical centre during a special visit.



Staff in the unit with mayor Carole Thompson and consort Phil Holbrook.

Councillor Carole Thompson, the ceremonial mayor of Hartlepool, and her consort councillor Phil Holbrook took a tour of the surgical replacement unit at the University Hospital of Hartlepool.

The unit forms part of the hospital’s nationally accredited surgical hub, treating patients having orthopaedic operations, including hip and knee replacements, as well as gynaecology, surgical and breast procedures.

Councillors Thompson and Holbrook spoke to patients like Brian Redshaw, 70, from Blackhall, who was recovering in the unit following hip replacement surgery.

Speaking from the unit, he said: “This is now my fourth replacement I have had here over the past decade – I wouldn’t want to go anywhere else.

“The staff are brilliant, I couldn’t fault anyone or anything about my experience. The care has been beyond my expectations.

“From the teams who have helped me before surgery, to the team in surgery and now the team here in the unit helping me recover, everything has been very professional.”

Councillor Thompson, who worked at the hospital for many years as an occupational therapist, also visited the chemotherapy unit during her visit.

She said: “As a Hartlepool girl, this is somewhere that is very familiar to me. I have been having a look at what the teams are doing here and I am very impressed.

“The elective ward – and the work they are doing performing surgery like hip and knee replacements – is absolutely brilliant.”

Two years ago, the hospital was awarded GIRFT (Getting It Right First Time) surgical hub accreditation, an NHS England initiative recognising excellence in clinical and operational performance.



Brian Redshaw recently underwent hip replacement surgery.

Teesside-based physiotherapist wins Apprentice of the Year award

A specialist physiotherapist dedicated to advancing women's pelvic health, has received an Apprentice of the Year award from Brunel University, in recognition of her exceptional commitment to patient care and clinical development.

Natasha McManus, a senior pelvic health physiotherapist at the University Hospital of North Tees, qualified as a physiotherapist 10-years ago and specialised in pelvic health six-years ago.

The award comes as she enters her final year of her Pelvic Health Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) Master's Apprenticeship. She describes the experience as a 'deeply reflective and transformative experience'.

Natasha said: "After several years and multiple postgraduate courses, I still felt I had unanswered questions.

"That realisation led me to take the leap into a three-year apprenticeship. I want to be able to improve pelvic health pathways so patients receive timely access to care and excellent treatment."

Natasha initially worked in musculoskeletal physiotherapy, supporting women experiencing pain during pregnancy. It was during this time that she realised there were elements of clinical assessments that could be improved.

She said: "We typically don't ask women about their pregnancy journey, menstrual health, or perimenopause and menopause - yet all of these have a profound impact on musculoskeletal conditions.

"I chose the apprenticeship route because I found myself inspired after hearing incredible pelvic health physiotherapists speak at a conference. Their work made me look seriously at advanced practice pathways.

"What appealed to me most was the opportunity to learn over time, rather than in a short, intense course. The most important lesson I've taken from the last three years has been the value of relationships within teams, mentors and with patients."

Receiving her Apprentice of the Year nomination came as a shock.

Natasha shared: "The award win is a bit like winning the Oscars - I feel truly seen and valued. It has reminded me that my peers believe in my work and the impact it has."

Natasha attended the awards ceremony in London on Friday 6 February and

found the ceremony inspiring, uplifting and confirmation of all her hard work to date.

She added: "If nothing else, I think the award reflects my resilience and passion for women's health. Work is my safe space, and improving women's wellbeing is what drives me."



Natasha McManus after receiving her certificate.

University Hospitals Tees shortlisted for five national digital awards



The impact of digital technology on the patient care we provide has been recognised by a prestigious awards body.

University Hospitals Tees has been shortlisted for five Health Service Journal (HSJ) digital awards – an annual celebration of excellence in digital projects.

Clinically led digital innovation has become central to the way the organisation delivers care, both inside hospitals and out in the community.

Lindsay Garcia, deputy chief nurse, said: "We're thrilled with these nominations.

"The key to success has been the shared vision and the collaborative working between our clinical and digital teams. This is reflected by the number of categories we have been named in."

University Hospitals Tees has been recognised in the following categories:

- Digital transformation organisation of the year
- Driving prevention and early intervention through digital

- Outstanding achievement in EPR (electronic patient records) implementation and optimisation
- Improving medicines and pharmacy through digital
- Driving virtual wards and hospitals through digital

The shortlisted projects are helping clinicians make faster, safer decisions through improved data, digital pathways and diagnostics. Patients are also experiencing better communication and more personalised care thanks to these innovations.

Neil Dobinson, deputy chief information officer, commented: "To be nominated for five HSJ digital awards is incredible.

"The digital team works hand-in-hand with our clinical colleagues at every stage of a project to make sure that improving patient care is at the centre of every project.

"It's a true partnership and I am so proud of everyone for this achievement."



The digital projects team and clinical colleagues at the University Hospital of North Tees.



The digital projects team and clinical colleagues at The James Cook University Hospital.

Nominations

Digital transformation organisation of the year

Project: 'Transforming care at South Tees: A journey from paper to digital excellence'

This clinically led programme of work has seen South Tees Hospitals move from paper-based records to electronic, resulting in increased patient safety benefits, including more time for care and significant cost savings.

Driving prevention and early intervention through digital

Project: 'Providing a pathway of support for the most vulnerable patients'

This work has assisted the implementation of Martha's Rule - a national initiative aimed at ensuring that patients and families can easily request a clinical review if they are worried about deterioration.

The project introduced a digital patient wellness questionnaire which combines patient, relative and clinical input to create a structured "early concern" assessment.

Outstanding achievement in EPR (electronic patient records) implementation and optimisation

Project: 'Clinical excellence in the digital revolution: The role of MIYA in safer, smarter care'

This work saw the digital team extend the use of the MIYA electronic patient records system to be used in inpatient services. The system now extends into outpatient services and has helped improve patient safety, medicines management, documentation quality and operational flow.

Improving medicines and pharmacy through digital

Project: 'TrakCare electronic prescribing and administration (ePMA2) optimisation.'

The project has modernised prescribing and medicines administration. Complex medicine workflows including infusions, injectables, epidurals, and enteral feeding have been digitised - removing the need for paper charts, reducing spend on stationery, and improving the quality of discharge information for patients.

Driving virtual wards and hospitals through digital

Project: This nomination highlights 'Transforming POSDU with a virtual ward: Accelerating safe patient discharge'

The virtual ward in Friarage's post operative surgical day unit (POSDU) allows patients to be discharged home earlier while still being safely monitored remotely.

The winners will be revealed in May 2026.



Lindsay Garcia, deputy chief nurse.



Neil Dobinson, deputy chief information and technology officer.

Healing Janice's heart from her own living room



For two years nurse practitioner Janice Oliver lived with a breathlessness she couldn't shake.

She blamed the after effects of COVID 19 and lifestyle changes after moving into a bungalow, but it didn't cross her mind that her heart was weaker than it should be.

Overtime her symptoms worsened, leading to dizziness and a near collapse.

She said: "Not once did I think it was my heart. I always had a high pulse, but it wasn't bad enough to have caused concern or make me go to a doctor about it."

Now, as she navigates the road to recovery, the 61-year old from Stockton on Tees has shared her story to champion the hospital service that became her lifeline.

After treatment for vertigo failed to improve her symptoms in November 2025, Janice was referred by her GP for a blood test, which in turn led to an echocardiogram.

The following day, she received the shock diagnosis of severe heart failure.

She said: "The doctors were just as surprised as I was."

Just before Christmas, Janice was quickly referred to North Tees and Hartlepool's award winning cardiac remote monitoring service.

The service supports patients with heart failure, like Janice, manage their condition at home.

Using a special app and a monitoring kit given to her by the team, Janice has been recording details including her blood pressure, heart rate, oxygen saturation and weight.

These recordings are reviewed by the specialist heart failure team, allowing them to closely monitor her condition and respond quickly if any concerns are flagged.

She said: "Knowing someone is constantly keeping an eye on you is incredibly reassuring."

Janice's medication is adjusted, using the data she uploads via the specialist app, and when her doses are stable (optimised) she will have another echo to determine future interventions.

Although Janice still has challenging days, she is starting to see progress thanks to the cardiac team.

She said: "The team have been a huge help, both physically and mentally."

"If I had to travel to hospital every week, I would have struggled because of my breathlessness. The service has saved me a lot of stress and anxiety."

Since North Tees and Hartlepool was selected as a pilot scheme for 'managing heart failure @home' in 2022, the service has gone from strength to strength.

It has led to the development of a virtual heart failure ward, and it has been rolled out across the cardiac rehabilitation service as well as to heart patients cared for by South Tees Hospitals.

Trudy Hunt, heart failure specialist nurse, said: "We are extremely proud to be flying the flag for remote community cardiac care."



(Left to right) Trudy Hunt, heart failure specialist nurse, Janice Oliver and Bev Fox, clinical support workers/digital champions

Hospital celebrates second anniversary of pioneering STI programme



The James Cook University Hospital's emergency department is celebrating the two-year anniversary of a programme that has detected hundreds of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) on Teesside – which would have otherwise gone untreated.



In January 2024, the emergency department was the first in England to launch syphilis screening for adults aged between 19 and 70 who are already having their blood sampled.

The pilot programme, which also included routine testing for HIV, and hepatitis B and C, ran for eight weeks. It was made permanent following its successful record of detecting blood borne viruses.

The initiative routinely tests anyone attending the emergency department for blood-borne diseases, unless a patient chooses to opt out.

This has helped identify infections early, many of which show no symptoms but could cause long-term health problems if left untreated.

Emergency department consultant Catriona Lane said: "The programme has been a huge success in helping us identify STIs that would have otherwise been left untreated.



The University Hospital of North Tees emergency department team.



"We'd like to thank both the emergency departments and the virology lab for doing a great job to ensure so many people with infections have been identified and treated via this programme."

Following the success, the screening programme was also replicated in the emergency department at the University Hospital of North Tees in October 2025.

The medical teams have performed more than 8,000 tests on people attending the two emergency departments.

This has helped detect:

- HIV: 42 positive tests
- Syphilis: 162 positive tests
- Hepatitis C: 245 positive tests

George Simpson, consultant in emergency medicine at University Hospital of North Tees, said: "The introduction of the programme has been a positive step for our community.

"Thanks to the simple and confidential test, many people who were living with an infection without realising it have received the right support and treatment."

If not treated early, some can cause permanent and serious damage to one's health.

If a patient receives a positive result, they will be contacted to arrange an appointment to discuss the next steps. If they do not hear anything within 28 days, they can assume their tests are negative.



The emergency department team at The James Cook University Hospital.

Spotlight on cancer support



Cancer affects all of us, directly or through our friends and families.

Across University Hospitals Tees, we have a wide range of services across our sites to offer personalised support to those we are treating for cancer and their loved ones.

Meet some of our cancer clinical nurse specialists

Cancer clinical nurse specialists play a crucial role in coordinating and delivering personalised care interventions, addressing both physical and emotional needs. They each work in a different cancer speciality and act as a point of contact for patients under our care. Meet some of the team...



Michelle Mitchell.

Michelle Mitchell, colorectal specialist nurse

With a 40 year career beginning in bowel cancer nursing, Michelle acts as a designated point of contact for the many patients she cares for at the University Hospital of North Tees. For her, the role is all about making patients' journey as seamless as possible and as safe as it can be.

Michelle explains: "You really get to know the patient, their relatives and you become part of their family in a way. You form a really close relationship with them and it's really a privilege to walk with people in their shoes.

"You're invited into someone's world and you're trying to make that world the best you possibly can for them at that time."



Claire Beevis, haematology nurse specialist

Claire is a haematology nurse specialist at The James Cook University Hospital. Her 30 year career has seen her dedicated to supporting patients across the North East with blood and bone marrow cancers.

She said: "My role enables me to support patients with care closer to home. I feel it's an important role gaining a trusted rapport with our patients and being able to assess them in their own surroundings.

"I work in a supportive and friendly team, who all strive to work together to streamline patient care and enable our often scared, frail and unwell patients to spend as much time at home as possible."



Claire Beevis.

Support at our sites

HOPE (Help Overcoming Problems Effectively)

HOPE is a six week programme which supports people to overcome obstacles or issues following treatment for cancer. It combines practical information, psychology and group therapy to allow patients to explore and adapt to their 'new normal'!

69-year old Anne Jones, from Norton, joined the University Hospital of North Tees' HOPE cancer course in November 2025 following breast cancer treatment.

Anne said: "The group is very supportive, I've made some good friends and it's decreased my worry about my cancer coming back. It's felt a very safe group for me and I've never felt like I shouldn't speak up. I would recommend it to anyone going through their cancer journey."

Read more about Anne's story on page 18.



Cancer prehabilitation

Our cancer prehabilitation programme supports people with cancer to get as fit as possible to help them cope with the physical and emotional demands of treatment.

Patients are referred into the programme as soon as possible after a cancer diagnosis. They receive personalised support around nutrition, mental wellbeing, smoking and alcohol and substance use, as well as access to exercise classes in community gyms across Middlesbrough, Billingham and Hartlepool.

53-year old Sam Wilks took part in the classes at Bede Sixth Form College's sport centre and gym ahead of treatment for breast cancer. She said: "I didn't know what to expect from the sessions, but I thought I would give it a go and it's been great. The team is wonderful and made me feel at ease."

If you would like to learn more, please ask your clinical nurse specialist for more information.

Further support

As well as drop-in support, our Macmillan cancer information centres also host several support groups and events for those impacted by cancer.

For more information, please contact our dedicated centres:

• Middlesbrough: 01642 835674 • Stockton/Hartlepool: 01642 383041 • Northallerton: 01609 764033

Maggie's

In October 2025, Maggie's came to Middlesbrough. The centre is located on the James Cook University Hospital site in place of the former Trinity Holistic Centre.

Maggie's offers practical, emotional and psychological care to everyone affected by a cancer diagnosis. This includes support with managing emotions, money worries, coping with day to day activities, dealing with side effects and much more.

Maggie's expert support benefits people like Colin McLurg who is currently undergoing treatment for prostate cancer. He said: "Upon entering I received a very warm welcome; smiling faces and the offer of a coffee or tea. I was given an overview of how Maggie's can assist all cancer patients and indeed their families as well."

"From my personal experience I am confident that this Maggie's facility will prove to be a great asset to all who are on the cancer journey."



Patient praises foot care team after advice helped transform his health

A man from Egglecliffe has praised NHS staff after their advice to get more active helped transform his health.

75-year old Joseph Telford was experiencing pain in his left foot after suffering with an ulcer when he was referred to the podiatry team at University Hospitals Tees.

As part of his treatment Joseph – who is diabetic – was booked for a specialist call about issues he was having palpating (feeling) the pulses in his feet.

He was given advice around exercising more to help improve his circulation – something that helps the smaller arteries to enlarge and carry more blood.

This then helps carry more oxygen to the muscles and skin, reducing a patient's risk of ulceration and improving the ability to recover more quickly from issues.

Joseph explains: "Back in January last year, I walked into a door and hurt my toe. It seemed badly damaged. My GP put me on antibiotics, which helped, but the toe went from painful to black, at which point I was referred on to podiatry.

"Since then, I've been to Hartlepool, Billingham, Egglecliffe and a few other places for my treatment. I went through rounds of dressings – weekly, then fortnightly, then four weekly, six weekly – and now I see the team every eight weeks for a review. The toe is fixed.

"Wherever I've been, and whoever has treated me, they've all been incredibly helpful. I can't tell you how understanding they've been. They're absolutely marvellous."

Joseph now goes for regular walks, either on his own or with his wife Rita, who is 71.

"The team have given me that advice to do as much as I can when it comes to exercise – and because of that not only has my recovery been faster but it has helped other issues I have with my heart.

"I am now doing lengthy walks without any breathlessness at all.

"I've also ended up with a much better experience of being outdoors, walking, and enjoying the countryside again."

The podiatry service not only runs clinics for patients at hospital sites at Hartlepool and Stockton but at various community locations.

Andrea Deiac, podiatrist, said: "It's fantastic to see that Mr Telford has made such great progress – thanks to both the expert advice of the team but also to his dedication in following this advice and support.



Joseph and his wife, Rita.

"We first booked him for a specialist test known as an ankle brachial pressure index, where we tested the pressure of blood flow in the feet and legs. During this test we also provide patients with empowering advice to help them improve their circulation and quality of life, and avoid ulcerations developing.

"It's great he has followed our advice and is recovering and feeling better in himself as a result."

Helping patients and families request an urgent clinical review

By Lauren Mazzey, Martha's Rule implementation lead nurse

At the University Hospital of North Tees, we are currently rolling out a new way of working to help give patients and their families a clear, formal right to request an urgent clinical review if they believe someone's condition is deteriorating.

Known as Martha's Rule, this was developed nationally in response to the death of 13 year old Martha Mills, who died from sepsis in 2021 after her symptoms were not escalated appropriately.

The initiative is built around early detection of deterioration and guarantees that patients, relatives, carers, and staff can activate a rapid review from a separate clinical team if they feel something is going wrong.

Most importantly, families themselves can call for an independent review - an option that will be clearly advertised across the hospital site.

Martha's Rule puts patients at the forefront of everything we do.

Patients and their families know their loved ones best, and we recognise the contribution that close family and friends make in noticing when their loved ones are unwell.

The campaign is focused on prevention. It ensures the right people notice and escalate small changes early. Staff are fully on board and we have already seen a lot of positive evaluation from those clinical areas who have adopted it first.

My role involves linking in with senior nurses, supporting staff, and working closely with the critical care outreach

team and medical teams. It is a national patient safety initiative, and it's important that staff feel supported as it is embedded.

I am here to help, working closely with the hospital team and ward based staff, and staying connected with senior nursing and medical teams.

It is making a difference. We're already seeing improvements in communication and giving patients a stronger voice.

With a background in emergency medicine, critical care, patient deterioration, and education, my role is about stopping preventable deterioration.

You can contact the service by calling 01642 617617 and asking for 'Call for Concern'

Martha's Rule has three core components:

- **How the patient is feeling** – daily wellness questionnaires help structure escalation and ensure staff act on any signs of deterioration
- **Acting on concerns** – improving communication between the workforce and families so worries are acted upon
- **Rapid review** – ensuring patients can access a quick assessment from the critical care outreach or paediatric team when needed



Ward 27 team

2026 with North Tees and Hartlepool Together

It has been a busy start to 2026 for North Tees and Hartlepool Together.

Firstly, a huge thank you to each and every person who dropped off gifts over the festive period for those staying with us and to thank our wonderful staff as well. Your generosity never fails to move us.

We continued to support colleagues as part of our open grant round. These open rounds give colleagues the opportunity to apply for money from our charity to support projects that make a real difference to patient care and staff wellbeing. We'll be announcing the results soon, so watch this space for more information.

In the meantime, we are now recruiting for people to represent our hospitals at Great North Run and Yorkshire Three Peaks – two of our favourite fundraising events of the year.

Great North Run: The world's biggest half marathon takes place on Sunday 13 September this year. Entries are open to anyone 17 or over on the day of the event.

We will ask you to pay a non refundable £68 registration fee, which goes to Great North Run to register your guaranteed place. We will also ask you to raise a minimum sponsorship of £250 to benefit our hospitals.

Yorkshire Three Peaks: Taking place on Saturday 18 July, this challenge takes on the peaks of Pen y-Ghent, Wharfedale and Ingleborough – 24 miles and 1,585 metres ascent in total.

You will pay a £35 registration fee, and our suggested fundraising target for this event is £150.

New for this year, there's also a fantastic one peak option – ideal for families, beginners or anyone wanting a more accessible challenge. Registration is £35, with a suggested fundraising target of £100 per person. Children aged between 8 and 15 can take part for free.

Get in touch: If either of these events take your fancy, or if you just want a little more information, please contact North Tees and Hartlepool Together fundraising coordinator Suzi Campbell on suzi.campbell@nhs.net

Thank you,

The North Tees and Hartlepool Together team

For more information about both of these events, visit our website or scan the QR code.



Before: The children's ward dance troupe ready to take to the stage.

And the results are in: Nurses win dance competition fundraiser

A troupe of paediatric nurses have been crowned the winners of a dance competition – all while raising money for the patients they support.

The team on the children's ward at the University Hospital of North Tees took on Nuvo Wellbeing's 'Strictly Nuvo' dance competition.

The black tie event raised £10,000 which will be split between the North Tees children's ward and Nuvo Wellbeing's 'N Dance Academies'. The money raised for the children's ward will be used to transform one of the ward's outdoor areas into a new therapeutic garden for young patients.



After: Members of the team with their winning trophy.

New research study screening babies for rare genetic conditions comes to Teesside

A national research study screening babies for more than 200 rare genetic conditions has started at the University Hospital of North Tees.

The maternity research team is taking part in the Generation study investigating the early diagnosis and treatment of rare conditions that may develop in early childhood.

As part of the study, a baby's genome is sequenced shortly after birth, using a small blood sample taken from the umbilical cord with parental consent.

This will test for many childhood onset genetic conditions where early treatment is already available.

Sharon Gowans, research midwife, said: "This trial will help us to look at whether genomic screening at birth is feasible, accurate, and beneficial.

"It will also improve understanding of this type of information and this data could help us to diagnose and treat rare diseases earlier.

"It has the potential to have a very positive outcome that could improve how we can care for someone who carries one of these rare conditions."

The genome is sequenced and analysed for specific conditions chosen by clinical experts.

Results are returned to parents by a specialist if a condition is suspected, then further diagnostic testing is offered, which will result in earlier interventions.

Stephen Wild, obstetrician and gynaecology consultant and principal investigator for the study, said: "The study aims to determine whether genomic screening should become part of future NHS newborn screening.

"The Generation study is one of the world's most ambitious newborn genomics projects. If successful, it could reshape how the NHS detects and treats rare genetic conditions, giving thousands of children a healthier start in life."

The study is being led by Genomics England in partnership with NHS England and aims to recruit 100,000 newborn babies across England.

For more information and to register your interest in the study, visit: www.generationstudy.co.uk



The maternity research team at University Hospital of North Tees.

Cancer survivor finds her way back to music after patient support group gives her HOPE

A breast cancer survivor has re-discovered her love of the accordion after joining a cancer course – with new friendships made along the way as well.



(Left to right) Macmillan cancer support worker Rachel Humble, Anne Jones, and cancer care coordinator Lisa Stuart.

69-year old Anne Jones, from Norton, joined HOPE (Help Overcoming Problems Effectively) in November 2025, following surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy to treat breast cancer.

Organised by cancer nurses and support staff, in collaboration with Macmillan Cancer Support, the six week programme supports people to overcome obstacles or issues following treatment for cancer.

Anne said: "After my treatment, I started to feel quite isolated.

"I've always had fears about group sessions but when I heard about HOPE, I knew I needed to do it because I was cowering away. The group is very supportive, I've made some good friends and it's decreased my worry about my cancer coming back."

The weekly meetings take place at Butterwick Hospice in Stockton on Tees and Alice House Hospice in Hartlepool. They are open to patients receiving cancer treatment under the care of North Tees and Hartlepool hospitals.

The course covers a range of topics, including stress

management, rebuilding relationships and coping with uncertainty. Participants are also asked to set their own personal goals to refocus priorities – for Anne, that was getting back to playing the accordion.

Anne continued: "Every week, just having a goal in mind has made me feel very motivated. It made me think more about what I can do each week for myself and gave me that little push. Now I'm back playing the accordion.

"It's felt a very safe group for me to explore those goals and I've never felt like I shouldn't speak up. I would recommend it to anyone going through their cancer journey."

The final session of Anne's cohort took place in December 2025 – but the group support doesn't stop there. After finding comfort and friendship in one another, participants have set up their own WhatsApp group chat and hope to meet regularly.

If you are under the care of North Tees and Hartlepool and would like to join HOPE, please contact the cancer information centre on 01642 383041 or speak with your cancer care coordinator or clinical nurse specialist.

NHS Assessment Centre celebrates 50 years of apprenticeship excellence



The Northern & Yorkshire NHS Assessment Centre celebrated its 50th anniversary with a landmark event recognising five decades of apprenticeship excellence and honouring the achievements of its 2024 and 2025 estates apprentices.

Held at the Hilton Newcastle Gateshead Hotel, the evening brought together NHS leaders, industry partners, training providers and former apprentices for a dinner, awards ceremony, entertainment, and reflections on the centre's long standing impact on developing skilled estates and engineering professionals.

Founded in 1974 by Mr W. Murray OBE, the centre began as an NHS apprentice training scheme and went on to influence the 1981 model scheme for engineering and building apprenticeships. More than 96% of its apprentices have completed their training and progressed into roles across NHS organisations in the North East and Yorkshire, with many advancing into senior or chartered positions.

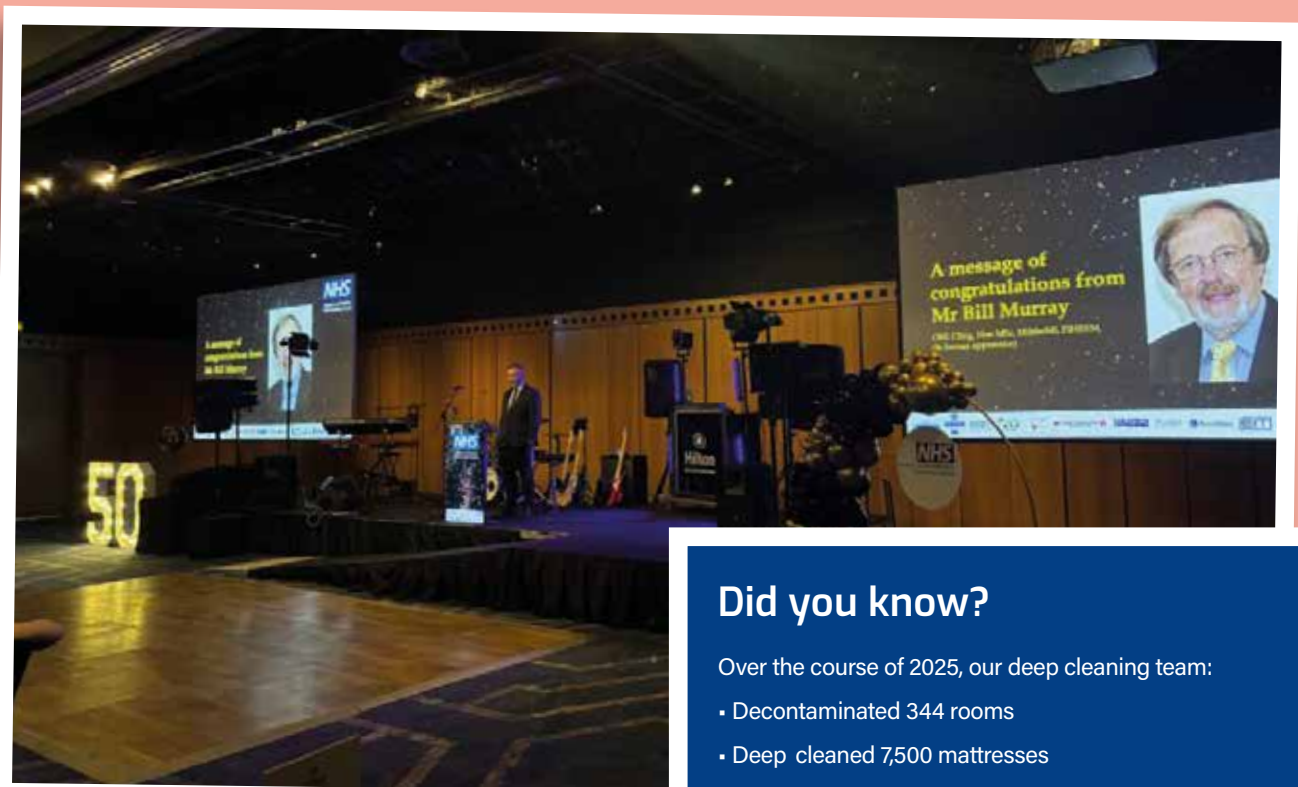
Now hosted by NTH Solutions LLP, the centre continues to support NHS employers across the region, supported by funding from NHS England North East and Yorkshire, NHS trust

levy contributions, and the Government's Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The anniversary event was backed by 14 leading estates and engineering organisations, reflecting the strong partnerships that have sustained the programme. The evening was hosted by Wayne Carr, Director at CHOICE Facilities Services and former apprentice, who praised the scheme's national reputation and its success in training more than 500 apprentices.

Nine apprentice awards were presented throughout the evening. One of NTH Solutions' own apprentices, Ben Gowland, received the Northern & Yorkshire NHS Assessment Centre Management Review Group Trophy – 4th Year Apprentice of the Year 2024.

The celebration highlighted the centre's enduring role in strengthening the NHS workforce and its commitment to developing the next generation of estates and engineering professionals.



The 2024/25 Northern & Yorkshire NHS Assessment Centre awards.

Did you know?

Over the course of 2025, our deep cleaning team:

- Decontaminated 344 rooms
- Deep cleaned 7,500 mattresses
- Delivered 15,000 pieces of medical equipment

Staff member makes emotional appeal for smokers to quit for good

Debbie Thomas, a clinical support worker, and her daughter Sadie have made an emotional appeal for smokers to quit the habit for good.

Debbie's husband Denham died in 2021 due to a smoking related illness.

Denham was diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease when he was just 35. A former pub landlord, nightclub doorman and fitness instructor, Denham was confined to a wheelchair from his mid-fifties, requiring full-time family care and oxygen.

Debbie said: "Smoking changed Denham's life completely, and it changed all our lives. It is so terribly sad thinking of all the things he missed out on.

"He would tell everyone he could to stop smoking and tell them: 'You don't want to end up in a wheelchair and on oxygen like me.'"

Debbie and Sadie, now 25, have featured in a video by Fresh

North East to share Denham's story and to encourage other smokers to quit for good.

Sadie said: "Even as a child I knew things were different because of my dad's health, and it just got worse over the years.

"He missed so much. He never even got to meet my daughter and his granddaughter Soul. He would have loved her."

Help to quit smoking

Smokers in the Stockton and Hartlepool region can call 01642 383819 for advice and support to quit.

Smokers in Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland can call 01642 727579 to access smoking cessation support.

Scan the QR code to watch Debbie and Sadie's video.



Debbie Thomas, Sadie and her daughter Soul.

Celebrating the impact of student volunteers

A student volunteer has shared how his opportunity to train in Teesside kick-started his career in the NHS.

Emmanuel Okafore, a psychology graduate from Teesside University and former volunteer at the University Hospital of North Tees, said: "Volunteering has had a huge impact on my life and career, helping me transition from my previous role supporting children with special educational needs to a new career in healthcare.

"The chance to volunteer in a hospital was an opportunity to gain hands on experience within a healthcare environment, building my skills to communicate effectively, while contributing to society in a meaningful way."

Emmanuel now works as a paediatric continence associate practitioner at University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust, supporting children and families through assessment, intervention and rehabilitation.

He added: "Studying and volunteering has helped me to develop my communication skills, empathy and how to respond to and support patients and families who are in distress – a skill which is used often in my current role.

"I continue to look for opportunities to give back to society, for the kindness and welcoming nature I have received since moving to the UK and working within the NHS."

Paul Wharton, head of volunteering at North Tees and Hartlepool, said: "Emmanuel is a great example of how volunteering opportunities can support to develop skills and



Emmanuel during his time volunteering at University Hospital of North Tees.



Emmanuel in his new role.

experience. He had a dream to change his career and whilst he completed his study, volunteering helped him to develop his passion for supporting patients and move into employment in the NHS."

Emma Vincent, deputy director of student futures at Teesside University, said: "Emmanuel's commitment shows how volunteering turns study into real world impact, building confidence, compassion and employability while strengthening our NHS partnerships."

Volunteer with University Hospitals Tees

- North Tees and Hartlepool: www.nth.nhs.uk/about/community/volunteering
- South Tees Hospitals: www.southtees.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/volunteer

Teesside endoscopy service celebrates reaccreditation success

A Teesside-based endoscopy service has once again been acknowledged for its 'high standard of achievement' as it celebrates its successful reaccreditation, following a recent annual review.



The endoscopy team celebrate their JAG reaccreditation.

The reaccreditation covers two endoscopy units – the Rutherford Morrison unit at the University Hospital of Hartlepool and the unit at University Hospital of North Tees for high risk procedures.

The service has officially met all of its Joint Advisory Group on Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (JAG) accreditation standards and has been renewed for another year.

JAG accreditation is voluntary for endoscopy services, but serves to promote quality improvement, highlight areas of best practice, and recognises areas that may need change.

It supports the continued development of the organisation's endoscopy service and demonstrates its dedication to delivering high quality care for our patients.

Dr Iosif Beintaris, consultant gastroenterologist and endoscopy lead, said: "We're thrilled to have been reaccredited – it's definitely something to celebrate.

"To have been reaccredited is acknowledgement of the ongoing commitment of our endoscopy team and I could not be prouder."

The JAG assessment highlighted the dedication of the team in delivering a high quality service and for their hard work during the accreditation process.

JAG oversees training for endoscopy in the UK, and carries out accreditation visits of endoscopy centres, averaging more than 500 assessments every year.

Iosif continues: "Our team has gone above and beyond throughout to be able to achieve this accreditation and everyone has been instrumental to our success.

"I would like to thank everyone for their continued hard work and I know we will continue to look for further ways to improve our service to continue delivering a first class service for our patients."

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Young artists bring colour and calm to University Hospital of North Tees

Art created by Yarm School pupils is helping to brighten the experience of patients, visitors and staff, as pieces ranging from expressive paintings to mixed-media collages are installed across University Hospital of North Tees.

Professor Derek Bell OBE, chair for University Hospitals Tees, and Ms Liz Stebbings, the recently retired former head of art at Yarm School, set the project in motion after recognising the opportunity for pupils' art to support wellbeing and offer comfort in the hospital setting.

A recent celebration event at the hospital brought together pupils, their parents and NHS staff, providing an opportunity to showcase the full collection and giving guests the opportunity to meet the young artists and learn about the inspiration behind their work, while seeing first-hand how the pieces will enrich the hospital environment.

The artwork will now be carefully installed in selected wards, corridors and key communal areas to maximise its impact, creating spaces that feel less clinical and offering a calming, comforting environment that provides momentary distraction and a sense of respite.

Poppy Stephens, a former A Level art student, contributed a powerful body of work that documented her grandfather's experience of dementia. These pieces have been selected to be used as a teaching aide for the medical teams working with people living with dementia.

Ms Liz Stebbings, recently retired former head of art at Yarm School, said: "It's inspiring to see the students' artwork making a real difference, brightening the clinical environment and providing moments of reflection and calm for all who experience it."



Yarm students with ex-head of art Liz Stebbings, and University Hospitals Tees representatives Derek Bell and Jean MacLeod.

Professor Derek Bell OBE, chair for University Hospitals Tees, said: "There is growing evidence that art and design helps to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals. For this reason, we are keen to support art within our hospitals and to work with local artists to showcase the creative talent we have within the region.

"Art can help create connection, change thinking, and help with healing. To finally see this project come together is special, and I am grateful to the pupils and staff at Yarm School who have helped make it happen."

ADVERTORIAL

From nursing to part-time health visitor and local council foster carer, Sharon shares her story:

"I started in the NHS in 1985 as a student nurse. It feels like a long time ago now, and all of my nursing career, I've tended to work with children and babies, and I've worked in intensive care. I've worked in the community and latterly, at the end of my career, I was a health visitor.

It was amazing, because I could foster as well, and I went part time and it was flexible working hours, so I got to do two things in my life that I loved to do.

Because I was a health visitor, learning about childhood abuse, learning about neglect, being empathetic and having that understanding and love and care and being really caring really helped. But having an insight into health also helps

care for children as well and looking at the growth and development, having that skillset has really helped.

If anybody is really wanting to think about fostering, they're on the verge of retirement, or wanting to change their career, or do both... I would say you won't regret it. It is fabulous, and I'm a really strong advocate for fostering."

Sharon, retired health visitor and local council foster carer

Explore how you can be someone's rock alongside your NHS role or as your next step, visit fosterwithnortheast.org.uk/ healthcare or call 0800 917 771

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