

news

@

Medway

NHS

Medway

NHS Foundation Trust

Autumn / Winter 2024



**Patient
"given life
back" after
groundbreaking
hip surgery**



Inside:

Gynaecology patients benefit from new robotic assisted surgery

Help us care for you this winter



Improving how we care for you



In this latest edition of **News@Medway** I am delighted to share more of the work we are doing to improve how we care for you and your loved ones. We are following a programme called **Patient First** which helps us focus on the areas where improvement is needed most.

If you happen to be at the hospital early on a Thursday morning, you might see staff gathered in the main entrance discussing some of these improvements at our weekly 'Patient First In the Spotlight.' You are very welcome to join us and you can read more about this on page 20.

One such improvement is making it possible for people to have a hip or knee replaced and go home the same day. Jamie Murison (page 12), one of the first patients to have a day case hip replacement, was soon back playing golf and walking his dogs free of pain after having his operation earlier this year.

We're also investing in new technology to improve care, such as our second surgical robot, called Hugo. Having a second robot is helping to extend

the many benefits of robotic assisted surgery to more patients and a wider range of procedures, including gynaecology. You can read more about this on page 6.

Colleagues from our surgical teams spoke passionately about these, and other, improvements at our Annual Members' Meeting in September, as about 80 people gathered here at the hospital to reflect on the achievements and challenges of the last year. You can read more about this on our website and page 23.

As we head into winter, and the challenges this brings for the NHS, I encourage all who are eligible for a flu or COVID-19 vaccination to take up the offer, as this will help protect you from serious illness. Turn to page 4 to find out more about how you can keep yourself well this winter.

Finally, I hope you enjoy reading this edition of **News@Medway** and thank you for taking an interest in your local hospital. I'd love to hear what you think of the magazine, so if you would like to share feedback about it, or have a story you would like us to tell, please get in touch.

Jayne

Jayne Black, Chief Executive

Email: medwayft.chiefexecutive@nhs.net

The News@Medway Team

Contributors: Su Button, Sophie Cawsey, Amanda Crawford, Stella Jones, Abby King, Donna Law, Hayley Pierre and Kim Willsea

Email: communications.medwayft@nhs.net

Website: www.medway.nhs.uk

Editor-in-Chief: Glynis Alexander
Editor: Will Chambers

Photography: Mike Gough
Design: Nina Lee



• **Ready to go:** Colleagues from the Endoscopy Team outside the new mobile unit

Bringing our endoscopy waiting lists down

Thanks to a new mobile endoscopy unit we can now see an extra 400 patients a month, on top of approximately 700 patients we already see on site each month.

This is great news for our patients as it means they can get the care they need sooner as our teams can start to bring down long waiting times, particularly for key specialities such as gastro, colorectal and hepatology patients, as well as our upper and lower gastrointestinal (GI) cancer patients.

Since the pandemic we have seen a significant increase in demand for endoscopy to investigate, diagnose or treat various conditions. To help meet the demand we have also expanded capacity by some patients going to Darent Valley Hospital in Dartford and others using the independent sector.

ANPR Parking at our hospital.

We are changing the car parking system for patients and visitors to Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). A camera will scan your number plate when you enter and leave car parks 1 and 2 to calculate how much you need to pay for your stay. You will no longer be given a paper ticket.

Search 'ANPR Parking' on our website for more information www.medway.nhs.uk

Did you know...?

We have an external defibrillator which can be used in an emergency if someone suffers a cardiac arrest. It can be found on the outside wall of residence 13, near the roundabout to the Green Zone car park (car park 2).

A code is required to access it. This is registered with Emergency Services call handlers and will be released should a member of the public call 999 and require use of it.



Looking after the wellbeing of our staff

We're pleased to announce that we have achieved Platinum in the Healthy Workplace Programme provided by Medway Council.

The programme supports businesses of all sizes and sectors to meet the health needs of their workplace. To achieve the award, we took over 30 pledges to work towards supporting the wellbeing of our colleagues, demonstrating the continuous improvement of our wellbeing offering and dedication to the wellbeing of our colleagues and the wider community.



LOOKING FOR A PHONE NUMBER FOR A WARD OR DEPARTMENT? OR WANT TO FIND OUT THE VISITING TIMES AT OUR HOSPITAL?

Our website has all that information and more!

Scan the QR code or head over to www.medway.nhs.uk and take a look.



Help us care for you this winter

We are ready to care for our patients this winter and beyond, however we urge you to take important actions to stay well, including getting your vaccinations where eligible.



RESEARCH SHOWS:

- If you get flu and COVID-19 at the same time, you're more likely to be seriously ill
- Getting vaccinated against flu and COVID-19 will provide protection for you and those around you for both these serious illnesses.



Flu season usually peaks in December and January, so starting vaccinations earlier ensures those most at risk are protected during the colder months when people gather indoors and viruses spread.

For the first time, the NHS is also offering vaccines for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a common cause of coughs and colds which can be dangerous to older people and young children. The jab is available to those aged 75 to 79, and pregnant women from 28 weeks.

Elsewhere, flu vaccinations are available for children to help stop the virus spreading in schools and nurseries.

VACCINES

Millions of people in England can book flu and COVID-19 vaccinations after the NHS rolled out additional protection for those most at risk.

Anyone eligible can book their vaccinations via the NHS website, by downloading the NHS App, or by calling 119 for free if you can't get online.

This year, based on the latest scientific evidence, both vaccines are available to adults aged 65 and over, residents in older adult care homes, those with underlying health conditions aged 6 months to 64 years, and frontline health and social care staff – including colleagues across Medway Maritime Hospital.

The vaccinations provide vital protection to keep people from developing serious illnesses and ending up in hospital during busy winter months.

GET ADVICE IF YOU FEEL UNWELL

During winter and periods of cold weather it's important to look after yourself if you start to feel unwell. You shouldn't wait until it gets more serious; instead seek advice as early as possible.



PHARMACY

Pharmacists can give treatment advice for a range of minor illnesses and can tell you if you need to see a doctor



GP

You may be able to speak to a GP online or over the phone, or go in for an appointment if they think you need to



NHS 111

Go to 111 online or call 111 if you have an urgent medical problem and you are not sure what to do

The sooner you get advice, the sooner you're likely to get better. In an emergency, go to A&E immediately or call 999.

Join organ donation scheme to help save lives



Did you know this year marks the 30th anniversary of the NHS Organ Donor Register?

Thanks to the generosity of 15 donors and their families, 39 patients were able to receive life-saving transplants facilitated by the hospital between 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. In the same period, there were 13 tissue donations to patients.

Following the change in the law in 2020 around organ donation, it is important to remember that it is assumed that when someone dies in the circumstances where they could be a donor, that they agree to donate if they haven't officially opted out. However, no-one is automatically added to the Organ Donor Register. People still need to confirm your decision, and your family will be consulted before donation goes ahead.

At present, there are around 7,000 people waiting for a transplant in the UK but as only 1,400 people die in circumstances where organ donation is possible, every donation is precious and can make such a difference.



Dr Gill Fargher, Chair of the Trust's Organ and Tissue Donation Committee, has been an advocate and champion for organ donation since the sudden and tragic death of her beloved husband Tristan, known as Tris, in January 2015 (pictured together on their wedding day).

She said: "My life was shattered when I lost Tris, but four people's lives were saved or transformed because of him at the time of his death when his kidneys and corneas were donated. Tris donated other tissues when he died and because of this, he helped 12 people in the months after his death.

"Confirming your decision to donate on the NHS Organ Donor Register makes it clear to your family that you want to be an organ donor, leaving them certain of your decision at what is a difficult and emotional time. We need more people in Medway and Swale to confirm their decision on the register today in order to save more lives now and in the future. It really could be the difference between life and death for someone else."

Confirm your decision at www.organdonation.nhs.uk
Users of the NHS app, can also use this to record, check or amend their details or decision.

Online patient portal tops 150,000 registrations

Since launching in October last year, our online patient portal, Patients Know Best, has helped more than 150,000 people access their own health information.



The portal aims to support a smoother experience for patients, giving them a single handy place to view appointments, appointment letters, discharge summaries and make changes to their upcoming care. People will soon be able to view results letters from different specialities such as radiology and pathology, as well as waiting list referrals too.

Chief Delivery Officer Gavin MacDonald said: "Patients Know Best was introduced to make it easier for people to access their health records which is one of our key priorities. This is a great milestone for us as we continue to put our patients first, as well as working to develop the portal further."

You can register for Patients Know Best through the NHS app by downloading it from the App Store or Google Play or logging in through the NHS website. You can also register through the dedicated **Patients Know Best website**.



Gynaecology patients benefit from new robotic assisted surgery

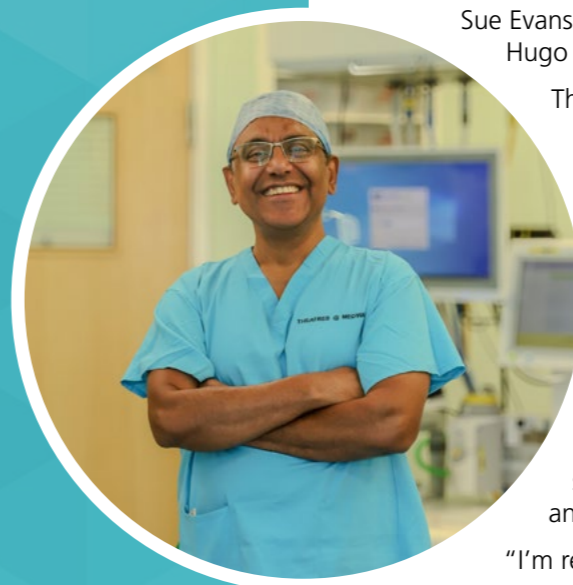
For the first time, our gynaecology patients are benefiting from robotic assisted surgery.

By Hayley Pierre

From its arrival in February 2024 to the the end of September 2024, the device, known as Hugo, has carried out 16 hysterectomies and replaced large incision abdominal surgeries (open surgery) with small incisions.

Surgeons operate the minimally invasive surgical tool from a console which translates their hand movements in real time to manipulate instruments during surgery. These instruments mimic the dexterity of a human hand but with greater flexibility allowing surgeons to access multiple areas and perform various surgeries through small incisions. It also offers a highly magnified, 3D view of the surgical area, which is shared with the operating theatre.

• Surgery photo courtesy of Medtronic



Sue Evans was the first gynaecology patient to undergo RAS using Hugo on 13 June 2024.

The 45-year-old mum of four had a full hysterectomy. She said: "I wasn't worried about a robot being used to do the surgery because the surgeon explained everything to me.

"I was sent home the following evening. The only pain relief I took was right after the operation and the next day, and the only discomfort I had was caused by the gas to inflate my stomach for surgery and some stomach cramps a few days afterwards.

"I was expecting to be bedbound and in lots of pain but that wasn't the case. Eleven days after the op I was ironing, carrying out normal housework duties, doing the school runs and my usual long walks. By 8 July I was driving and the following week I was back at work.

"I'm really pleased with the results and my recovery. I highly recommend robotic surgery as the pain was minimal and it was a very, very quick recovery."

RAS was first offered to urology and colorectal patients back in 2017 when we adopted the da Vinci device.

As Hugo is also approved for urology and colorectal procedures we are using it to treat more patients under these specialities too. From the end of September 29 colorectal and 32 urology patients have benefited from RAS with Hugo.

Consultant Gynaecologist and Obstetrician and Speciality Lead for Gynaecology, Periyasamy Krishnamoorthy, known as Krish, said: "The arrival of Hugo is a significant development for us. Not only has it allowed us to expand the offering of RAS to a different group of patients and set new standards when it comes to women's healthcare, it also ensures our patients benefit from the latest advancements in medical technology which allows us to deliver the highest level of patient care and better outcomes."

Benefits for patients include:

- less pain
- less chance of needing follow-up surgery or experiencing a complication
- less need for blood transfusions
- less time in hospital



• **Pioneers:** Krish (pictured above centre) next to Professor Martin Sheriff, Trust Robotic Lead, and some of Medway's robotic surgery team



Our oldest volunteer turns 90!

By Amanda Crawford

For nearly 24 years, volunteer Dotty Rust has been walking the floors of Medway Maritime Hospital, helping visitors, patients and staff. And even though she recently celebrated her 90th birthday, is showing no signs of slowing down.

After retiring from a job in the wages department at a local firm in Gillingham, Dotty took up volunteering.

She said: "When I retired, the retirement age was 60, but although I stopped working full-time, I wanted to keep doing something."

"So, I volunteered for the League of Friends at All Saints' Hospital in Chatham for four years until it closed in 1999."

Dotty, who has a son and daughter and two granddaughters, can be found in the Charity and Volunteers' hub on a Tuesday and on the Volunteers' Desk on a Thursday.

- **Time to party:** Dotty celebrated her 90th birthday with friends and colleagues at Medway Maritime Hospital

She said: "I volunteer to meet and help people. The other day I walked somebody to where they needed to go, she apologised for being slow as she was 86. I said it was fine, I was 89 and we could walk slowly together. That was why I was there – to help her."



"People ask how long I will carry on volunteering for, and I say I will know when the time is right to hang up my volunteering badge."

Chief Executive Jayne Black said: "I'm in awe of Dotty, and indeed all our volunteers' commitment for giving their time and helping us provide high-quality, compassionate care to the people of Medway and Swale. They really do a fantastic job, and I am incredibly thankful."

If you would like to join our team of volunteers, contact Zoe Goodman, Voluntary Services Manager, on 01634 825246 or zgoodman@nhs.net

New Medway doctors join innovative 'Simway' training

By Will Chambers

Fifty Foundation Doctors joining the NHS for the first time took part in an innovative 'Simway Hospital' training event.

The award-winning simulated clinical training session is hosted by the hospital for new Foundation Year One (F1) doctors annually. The national Foundation Programme is a two-year, work-based training programme which is intended to bridge the gap between medical school and training to become a doctor.

At Medway, 'Simway Hospital' allows participants to take on their new roles, apply and improve clinical skills using state-of-the-art simulation equipment, and integrate with their hospital colleagues, helping staff step from simulation to working with patients as more confident and competent clinicians.

Foundation Doctor Benjamin Lawton said: "The 'Simway Hospital' experience was a fantastic way of settling in and feeling more comfortable at the start of my medical career. With the way the final year worked at my medical school, it had been a while since I had actually been in a clinical space, and thought I

would have forgotten everything. However, having the safe and supportive environment to find my feet again provided gave me so much confidence. The event provided fun and learning, and helps so much as we move forwards in our careers as doctors."

This year's 'Simway Hospital' session was bigger and better than ever before, with close to 200 people taking part. This included more than 50 new F1 doctors; speciality consultants and doctors from medicine, surgery, psychiatry, emergency medicine, and radiology; nurses; clinical support workers; physiotherapy and pharmacy colleagues; the Trust's Acute Response Team; as well as hospital volunteers and local school students.

Gemma Dockrell, Clinical Simulation Operational Manager at Medway NHS Foundation Trust, and 'Simway

"The event provided fun and learning, and helps so much as we move forwards in our careers as doctors."



Facilitators included Dr Ashike Choudhury, Consultant Emergency Medicine; Alison Davis, Chief Medical Officer; Gemma Dockrell, Clinical Simulation Operational Manager; and Dr Felicity Brokke, Consultant Neonatologist.

Hospital' facilitator, said: "We strive to provide training at Medway that is safe and enjoyable and helps in our continuous drive to improve patient care. 'Simway Hospital' is an important learning opportunity that helps give our colleagues the best start for working in a hospital environment."

"Thanks to all our staff and volunteers for making this a success, including our excellent Medical Education and Simulation teams for facilitating such a hands-on and innovative experience."



• **In action:** Foundation Doctors during the training session





• All smiles: Some of our award-winning team at the HSJ Patient Safety Awards

Emergency surgery project awarded special prize

An initiative that has reduced waiting times and improved outcomes for patients needing emergency surgery in Medway has been highly commended at this year's HSJ Patient Safety Awards.

These esteemed awards programme, designed to encourage and drive improvements in culture and quality across the NHS.

Staff from the surgery and anaesthetics department at Medway Maritime Hospital scooped the prize in the 'Urgent and Emergency Care Safety Initiative of the Year' category.

The project, led by Dr Akuratiyage De Silva, Anaesthetist, and Natalie Baxter-Evans, Emergency Clinical Coordinator (both pictured below), has brought together teams involved in emergency surgery, to identify and remove barriers that delayed patients' operations, guided by the hospital's Patient First improvement programme.

Natalie Baxter-Evans said: "We were so honoured when we heard we'd been highly commended in our category, and we know it will mean a huge amount to our colleagues as well as the wider community within our workplace. Professional awards such as this are always a real boost to staff morale and an incentive to continue our efforts to improve the services we deliver and the overall patient experience."

Dr De Silva said: "As a result of the changes, we are seeing more patients through this specialist operating theatre, so they are getting the treatment they need sooner. Not only has this benefited our patients, which was our main focus, it has also helped build staff morale and improve wellbeing. Using the theatre more efficiently also saves the hospital almost £100,000 per year."

The awards ceremony was hosted by comedian and TV presenter, Zoe Lyons, in Manchester on 16 September. An incredible 415 entries were received, with 206 organisations, projects and individuals making it to the final shortlist, having gone through two rounds of rigorous judging.

Alastair McLellan, Editor of the Health Service Journal, said: "It's always wonderful to take some time to celebrate those who are working at the forefront of patient safety, delivering core services and always seeking new ways of overcoming challenges."

"It gives me great pleasure to congratulate all those who were highly commended, including Medway NHS Foundation Trust in the category of Urgent and Emergency Care Safety Initiative of the Year."

"The aim of this year's event was to provide a space for 'honest conversations' about how to create safety in a system under pressure – and I really believe that our winners this year truly reflected and represented this ethos."

"Once again, it's been so heartening to see such a huge level of entries, submitted by hard-working and dedicated teams who, in these ongoing times of budget uncertainty and workforce shortages, are striving to deliver improved patient care and to ensure patient safety, education and wellbeing is at the heart of decision making at all levels."

Cancer unit given top marks

Our Macmillan Cancer Care Unit has received a top award for the services it provides to help support people living with cancer and their families.

It achieved the Macmillan Quality Environment Mark after it scored five out of five for creating a welcoming and friendly space that meets people's needs. Top marks were awarded following an assessment of Galton Day Unit, inpatient services on Lawrence Ward, shared spaces, information resources and staff areas.

The report said the unit 'exceeded the level required to retain the Macmillan Quality Environment Mark and is to be congratulated on this achievement.'

It also noted how the staff have embedded a continual cycle of improvements in terms of the environment and service provision and identified a need to expand the service provision.



Vicky Kidner, Macmillan Lead Nurse for Chemotherapy and Matron for Cancer Services (pictured left with some of the team), said: "Retaining the quality mark is evidence of the hard work and commitment from every single member of the team to ensure our patients receive the very best care when they access the unit during what is already an extremely difficult and emotional time in their life."

"We plan to continue building on this success to ensure the environment and our services always meet the needs of our patients and their loved ones."

One-stop shop earns recognition for nurses

Our Learning Disability Nurses have been shortlisted for a Nursing Times Award 2024 for introducing a 'one stop shop' service for patients with learning disabilities and autism who require medical procedures under a general anaesthetic.

The Learning Disability Nurses and hospital colleagues came together to launch the pathway which allows patients to have a combination of important treatments such as blood tests and vaccinations (for patients with severe needle phobia), dental and podiatry work, and endoscopies or colonoscopies, carried out while sedated following a best interest decision.

Usually these procedures are completed while a patient is awake, but for people with learning disabilities and autism they can be traumatic and overwhelming without a general anaesthetic.

During their time in hospital while under general anaesthetic for a medical treatment, patients are cared

for by multi-disciplinary teams across the hospital and from Medway Community Healthcare (MCH) who work to ensure that all 'reasonable adjustments' are made to facilitate a safe and patient-centred experience.

Chief Executive Jayne Black said: "I'm incredibly proud of all colleagues who came together to launch this initiative. By having more access to these important treatments, it ensures patients have a better quality of life and improved outcomes. It also makes a huge difference to the experience of patients with learning disabilities and autism."



• **Leading the way:** Learning Disability Nurses Eloise Brett and Tony Hunt

Improvements to the unit since the last assessment in May 2021, which it passed with flying colours too, included:

- LED light boxes in the ceilings of some of the rooms.
- An electronic screen in the waiting room to advertise the quiet room, spiritual space and events in the centre.
- Recliner seating replaced in response to feedback.
- Dementia friendly clocks within the unit.
- 'All about me' boards on Lawrence Ward to encourage more personalised care and support.
- Computer trolleys so that records to be completed at the chairside.
- Redecoration throughout the unit following consultation with patients.
- A new pharmacy area where patients can discuss their medication and any side effects with a pharmacist.

Hips and knees are all in a day's work

Some patients undergoing hip and knee replacements at Medway Maritime Hospital are now going home on the day of their operation instead staying in overnight or longer.

By Will Chambers



The hospital has expanded its same-day surgery pathway for suitable patients, and its proving very popular. Jamie Murison, from Medway, who was one of the first hip replacement day case patients and was delighted to be up and about quickly. He has praised staff for 'giving his life back' and helping him on the road to recovery in record time.

Jamie said: "Three months on I am virtually 100 per cent, and I am back to walking the dogs without pain and the best bit, playing golf and reducing my handicap – yes!

"When I found out the operation would be done as a day case and I would be home by teatime it was great. Ahead of the surgery I met all the fantastic teams involved, including Rahij Anwar, the surgeon.

"On the day I was quickly booked in at reception and taken to a private room to get ready – the team were really helpful, putting me at ease as I was nervous. I went down to surgery at around 9am, and after two hours in the operating theatre, I was sitting in recovery with a cup of tea.



Team effort: Mr Rahij Anwar, Locum Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon proudly represents the surgical and anaesthetics team at Medway

"I was then moved to the Sunderland Day Care Centre, where the team did an amazing job looking after me and making us feel at ease. I had many visits from various members of Mr Anwar's team, each of them giving me advice on my recovery and generally checking that I was ok after the procedure, before I left just after 5pm for home.

"The first week was difficult, but getting on top of the pain relief was key. Once we cracked that with the help of staff, I was on the road to recovery. I was walking almost immediately, tackling the stairs and bending without too much pain.

After three weeks, I was starting to become a changed man and getting back to my old self.

"Mr Anwar's team monitored me remotely throughout, which included video calls and home visits – all the team were so kind, caring and considerate.

"I cannot express how grateful I am to Mr Anwar and staff at hospital. They have without doubt given me my life back and I will be forever grateful."

Rahij Anwar, Locum Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at Medway NHS Foundation Trust, said: "The service is progressing very well and we are routinely seeing patients like Jamie for day case joint replacement surgery. We have plans to expand this for other operations, which will help to free up a further beds and improve productivity across the hospital.

"It's clear that where suitable, day case joint replacement gives patients control over their surgery and allows them to complete their recovery in the comfort of their own home.

"This is truly a team effort and would not be possible without the great efforts of colleagues from our virtual ward, theatres, physiotherapists, anaesthetists, pre-assessment and many others."

"... I am back to walking the dogs without pain and the best bit, playing golf and reducing my handicap – yes!"



Hole in one: Jamie's back on the putting green just a few months after his hip operation



Donations fund rehab trolley for sickest patients

Some of our sickest patients are being helped along the road to recovery thanks to an idea by one of our physiotherapists.

Emily Haines, from the Critical Care and Surgical Team, decided to create a mobile rehabilitation trolley, to help early rehabilitation for patients as they recover from a critical illness.

She said: "I noticed that some patients who were in intensive care for long periods of time needed more mental and physical stimulation. Seeing the mobile trolley approach in other hospitals really helped me work on this project to help our patients recover quicker."

After submitting a bid to The Medway Hospital Charity, Emily was successful in receiving £850 in funding to make her idea a reality.

The trolley includes games, communications aids such as whiteboards and pens, plus hand weights, beanbag toss and a hoop to throw a ball to help make physiotherapy sessions fun and engaging and improve patients' strength as they recover.

"Having the trolley is hugely beneficial to patients on the Intensive Care Unit and High Dependency Unit during our therapy sessions," Emily added.

"One patient told me he was much more relaxed and less anxious after the team had taken the time to do this with him, especially using the hoop to throw a ball in.

"I would like to thank The Medway Hospital Charity for their funding of this project."

You can find out more about the work of The Medway Hospital Charity on pages 16 and 17.

Getting patients up and out of bed

We're currently piloting different initiatives to help get patients up and out of bed and stop them from deteriorating during their stay with us.

Staff have been getting patients up for lunch on Kingfisher Ward, Wakeley, Byron, and Sapphire wards. A dining experience on Tennyson Ward and Emerald Ward has also been trialled to help dementia patients increase their food and fluid intake.

Physiotherapists at Sheppey Frailty Unit are running weekly breakfast clubs to encourage patients to get out of bed, get dressed and make their own breakfast. Chair-based exercise classes are also offered to patients on Minster Ward.

The Older Persons' Therapy Team are running weekly 30-minute reconditioning exercise classes on Tennyson Ward and Milton Ward. The sessions involve patients taking part in group seated exercises, performed to music, using equipment such as hoops and balls. Bedbound patients are also encouraged to exercise at their bedside with support from the team.

All of these initiatives support the national End PJ Paralysis campaign which aims to get patients up and out of bed to help improve mobility and mood and ultimately reduces the patients' length of stay in hospital.



'Stop smoking service helped me quit for good'

A mum has spoken about how our in-house stop smoking service helped her to kick the habit during and after her pregnancy.

Natasha Roome was referred to the 'Quit for Two' service after she contacted the hospital's Call the Midwife service and asked for help to stop smoking before she was due to attend her first midwife appointment for her fourth pregnancy.

The 12-week programme includes behavioural therapy, nicotine replacement therapy as well as emotional support in a community setting.

It is thanks to the support she received from Maternity Smoke-Free Advisor Emma Newborough that Natasha says she was finally able to give up smoking while pregnant and remain smoke-free after her son Roman was born earlier this year weighing a healthy 7lbs 14ozs.



Quit for good: Natasha with son Roman

Natasha, who started smoking at the age of 13 and used to smoke between 15 and 20 a day, said: "I'd tried to give up multiple times over the years, but I could never stick to it. Instead, I would whittle myself down to about five roll-ups a day while I was pregnant.

"It was a habit, and I liked it, and it helped with my anxiety, but when I

fell pregnant with Roman, I was ready to quit. I'm not getting any younger and with a fourth child on the way I didn't want to be the type of mum who could only run around with their kids for a few minutes before getting out of breath.

"I started with gum, then patches before trying a vape which worked for me, but I even quit that a few weeks after Roman was born. Now when I'm feeling anxious or like I need to hold something, instead of grabbing a vape or a cigarette I grab a pen.

"I couldn't have done it without Emma's support though. She was absolutely brilliant. I would have struggled to quit without her help."

As well as saving money Natasha has discovered some other added benefits of quitting smoking. She said: "My clothes don't smell anymore which is just lovely.

"My family are proud of me and I'm proud of myself. I'm not going back to smoking ever again."

From the moment a pregnant woman quits smoking the benefits for both mum and baby include:

- Blood pressure returns to normal after just 20 minutes
- More oxygen to the baby which helps them reach a healthy weight during pregnancy
- Feeling less sick
- The risk of miscarriage, premature delivery, stillbirth and cot death reduces
- Less risk of developing heart disease and cancer
- Clothes and hair smell cleaner, and skin looks better
- Savings of over £3,000 a year (for someone who smokes 20 a day)
- Not worrying or feeling guilty about the harm caused to the baby.

Considering a career in the NHS?

Work experience is a fantastic way to gain an insight into a wide range of NHS career opportunities and we have many exciting options available at the hospital that can help you to make informed choices on your future career options.

To access a placement within the Trust, students must complete a work placement application form and health questionnaire. We will then do our best to identify a suitable placement.

Scan the QR code or visit our website for more information www.medway.nhs.uk/work



Grateful family raises more than £7,000 for ICU in memory of Charlie

By Donna Law

When Stuart 'Charlie' Charlesworth developed a high temperature the day before lockdown in March 2020, he thought it was a simple infection and he'd get better soon.

Tragically, a month later, on 19 April, he died of COVID-19 in Medway Maritime Hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU). He was just 45 years old.

Following his death, his widow Emma and their daughter Rebekah (14), have been fundraising for the unit and have donated an incredible £7,170 to date in Charlie's memory.

Asked why they fundraise, Emma simply said: "We don't want his death to be in vain. Something good has to come out of it."

Emma has nothing but praise for the ICU team and explains how Charlie came into our care.

"Charlie came down with a temperature the day before we were put into lockdown and steadily went downhill from there. In the early hours of my birthday (30 March) he couldn't breathe, and I thought he was having a panic attack. It was almost as though he wanted to cough something out him, but couldn't," she said.

“ WE DON'T WANT HIS DEATH TO BE IN VAIN. SOMETHING GOOD HAS TO COME OUT OF IT. ”



Skype Angels Sharon and Mel were on hand to help families and patients stay in touch during the COVID-19 pandemic

"I called an ambulance at 3am and, when the paramedics arrived, he rapidly deteriorated due to a lack of oxygen. Just six hours earlier he'd been shaving in the bathroom. The paramedics gave him oxygen and after that he sat up and said, 'It's me, I'm back. Please sit me up'.

"He was taken in for observation and Rebekah and I could merely wait for news, choosing to watch Disney films while we did. I genuinely thought I'd be picking him up later that day as he walked to the ambulance but two hours after arriving in hospital, I learnt he'd been sedated and ventilated in ICU. For the first week he was in, I just kept thinking they'd got the wrong person because I hadn't seen him."

On 12 April, the family was told to prepare for the worst, but still had hope as Charlie rallied and had his eyes and mouth open on 18 April. However, a day later, he died leaving behind Emma and a then 10-year-old Rebekah.

Emma said: "I had a call from the ICU team to say that he had died. It was really weird as because of all the lockdown restrictions it was just me and Rebekah at home. No-one could come to see us. Only 10 people could attend his funeral to say goodbye.

"I cannot fault the support that we had from ICU. The team were brilliant. We had video calls with 'Skype Angels' Mel and Sharon while he was in hospital. The team took handprints following his death and Anita and Sara, nurses from the ICU team held monthly calls to check in with us. They set up a support group for people who'd lost loved ones to COVID-19."

Emma has held two 'CharlieFest' events, one in June 2022 and one this May, in what would have been Charlie's 50th birthday year, to raise money for ICU. She also created calendars and greeting cards, from photos of animals taken by Charlie, and raised money through sales.



• Emma and her daughter Rebekah visited ICU recently and presented the team with a cheque for £2,570



Another fundraising event is planned for September 2025, on what would have been Emma and Charlie's 20th wedding anniversary. If you can support Emma's fundraising – please visit her Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/lifeisarollercoaster.co.uk

SUPPORT THE MEDWAY HOSPITAL CHARITY

If you'd like to help make a positive impact for our patients in Medway and Swale, there are many ways you can get involved:

- Leave us a gift in your will
- Sign up to make a smile lottery
- Join us at one of our fundraising events, or set up one of your own
- Take part in a charity challenge event
- Make a donation through our website or Just Giving
- Use our new tap to donate point in main reception.

For more information, please get in touch:

01634 825398 | medwayft.charity@nhs.net | www.medwayhospitalcharity.org.uk





Meet the

Vilomah Maternity Bereavement Team

Losing a child is devastating so it's important that families have the right support from the start to help them with their loss.

Our Vilomah Maternity Bereavement Team based at the hospital, is here to support parents through pregnancy loss in the maternity department, gynaecology department and the neonatal unit.

The word "Vilomah" is a Sanskrit term that refers to a parent who has lost a child.

Lead Specialist Bereavement Midwife Yvonne Morrison said: "The support we offer is tailored to each family's needs. It can be support, advice and guidance through telephone calls, as well as WhatsApp messages and face-to-face home visits for as long as required. We provide support for siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles too as we know that pregnancy loss is a far-reaching event. As part of our role, we also help with funeral arrangements.

"Working closely with the multidisciplinary teams, we ensure parents can make informed choices, have all their results and care plans for subsequent pregnancies in place and that every baby can receive a blessing by our chaplains when they are born.

"Additional support is offered to families who are pregnant following the loss of a baby, as this can be an extremely emotional and difficult time that is filled with worry, anxiety, sadness and uncertainty as well as happiness."

Thanks to the charity Abigail's Footsteps, Abigail's Place was opened at the hospital in 2016. The bespoke bereavement suite allows families to spend time with their babies before they go home. Described as the gold standard of bereavement suites, it is something the team, and the hospital, is immensely proud of.

Yvonne said: "We strive to maintain the gold standard we know our parents and families deserve as we know we only have one chance to make it right. With all that we do and everything we have to offer families during one of the darkest times of their lives, we truly believe we can achieve this."

With the help of other charities, our Vilomah Maternity Bereavement Team can offer the following memory making and support to families following the loss of a baby:

Cherished Whispers – memory boxes containing invaluable mementoes for the family to share with their baby.

Making Miracles - Memory Bears, storybooks and bereavement counselling.

Aching Arms – teddy bears that parents can carry out of the hospital so their arms are not empty.

4Louis – Moses baskets, blankets, towels, sibling packs, religious packs for different faiths.

First Touch Tiles – Free ceramic hand and footprint tiles.

SANDS – Hand and footprint kits.

• **Team Vilomah:** Lead Specialist Bereavement Midwife Yvonne Morrison pictured above with Bereavement Specialist Midwife Danielle Burnett.

Couple's kind donations to help families after the loss of a baby

Memory bears and crocheted hats and blankets have been donated to the hospital to help bring comfort to families following the loss of a baby.

Kimberley and Nicholas Miles gifted 15 bears, 12 crocheted hats and three crocheted blankets to our Vilomah Maternity Bereavement Team in memory of their son Rupert who was born at 20 weeks' gestation on 23 March 2023.

The memory bears were bought from the charity Making Miracles thanks to funds raised by friends and family donating to a JustGiving page that the couple set up in memory of Rupert.

Mrs Miles said: "The bears are really special because they have a zip on the back for you to put any memories or your baby's ashes inside.

"I was given my own Memory Bear by our bereavement specialist midwife Danielle Burnett after we sadly lost

Rupert. When I had to say goodbye to Rupert in the hospital, I was left with aching arms but having the bear to cuddle really helped. It now holds his ashes and it's nice to have something to hold and remember him.

"When Rupert's first birthday was approaching I learnt to crochet so I decided to make hats and blankets for the parents of other angels so they can put them on their baby's head when they are born sleeping. Having a hat to dress Rupert in when I was in the hospital meant a lot to me and Nicholas, so this is our way of giving something back. We really hope the bears and the hats and blankets will help bring some form of comfort to other bereaved families."

"I decided to make hats and blankets for the parents of other angels."



• **Made with love:** Nicholas and Kimberley Miles with the bears, hats and blankets they donated



Shining a light on our midwives

Some of our midwifery team are the stars of our new promotional film to highlight the varied and rewarding career opportunities in the profession here at Medway.

It was commissioned by Kent and Medway's Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS) as part of a campaign to highlight Kent and Medway as a great place to live, learn and work.

You can watch the video on our **YouTube channel**.





Join our weekly open improvement session

To help us improve the care we give, we are following a programme called Patient First which focuses on the areas where we can do things better.

As part of this, each week, we hold an open session in the main entrance which everyone is welcome to join, whether they are staff, patients, family, carers or visitors to the hospital.

This session, known as 'Patient First: In the Spotlight' gives our staff an opportunity to share a success they have achieved in their area which has resulted in an improvement in the way we care for our patients.

It's a different speaker each week and they give a short presentation about the improvement they have made or are making. It lasts no longer than 15 minutes and there's an opportunity afterwards for anyone in the audience to ask a question about what they have heard.

It's free to join in, and open to all, so please do come along and hear about the great work we are doing.

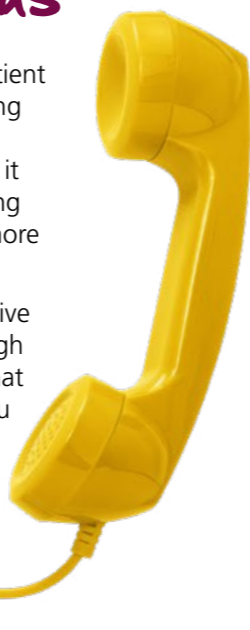
Making things better when you telephone us

At Patient First: In the Spotlight in September, we heard how colleagues are working hard to improve the experience when patients, families and others try to contact us by telephone.

We know from feedback we have received that it can be frustrating and worrying when you are unable to get through to us to discuss your appointment, test or scan. We also know that just over half of all telephone calls made to us are abandoned without being answered and this is something we need to try to put right.

So we are tackling this as a priority under our Patient First improvement programme. We are introducing new technology into our contact centre so that we can focus on reducing waiting times, making it easier to reschedule appointments, and simplifying department transfers, and provide quicker and more accurate responses to patient queries.

Colleagues shared progress of this exciting initiative and the next step is to test the technology through focus groups. In the coming months, we hope that your experience will be much improved when you contact us by telephone.



Patient-led assessment improvements

The results of our annual audit that looks at how hospitals ensure patients are cared for with compassion and dignity in a clean, safe environment, show a significant improvement in all areas compared to the previous year.



Assessors, which include patient representatives and members from the Infection, Prevention and Control, Estates and Facilities and Nursing departments, carry out the Patient Led Audit for Care Environment (PLACE) assessment. The criteria looks at levels of cleanliness, condition and appearance of our buildings, dementia support for patients, disability and access provisions, privacy, dignity and wellbeing of patients and the nutrition and hydration of patients through food tasting.

The top three areas we improved in most were privacy, dignity and wellbeing, dementia and disability.


Associate Director for Facilities Mona Kalsi said: "Our estates, facilities and nursing teams have action plans to highlight any gaps and to review progress, which will help us work towards improving our 2024 assessment score."

Your say Tell us about your experience!

Patient feedback is really important to us. Listening to the views of patients, and their friends and family, allows us to understand what is working well, and what we need to do to improve our services to ensure we deliver the very best of care to patients at all times. It also allows us to improve the hospital environment for everyone.

Our Friends and Family Test provides all patients, as well as their carers and loved ones, the opportunity to leave feedback on their care and treatment. The questions are short and simple, and the survey takes no more than a few minutes to complete.

For details on completing the Friends and Family Test, search 'have your say' on our website www.medway.nhs.uk

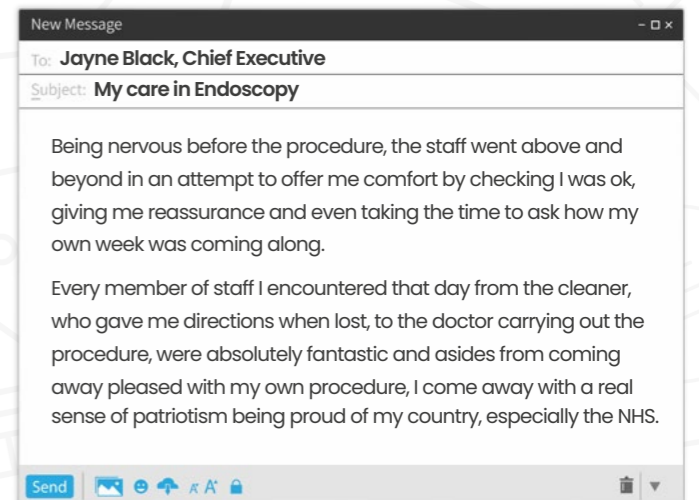
 I would like to thank the **Sunderland Day Case Unit** for the exceptional care I received today for surgery I needed. Everything ran like clockwork. If you need to attend the unit you can be confident about whatever you need to be done. Thank you.

Everything went as planned. Very nice staff and efficient.

Friends and Family Test feedback for the Nuclear Medicine Department

Friends and Family Test feedback for Seahorse Ward

Everyone who looked after us were lovely and everything was explained patiently. A very caring environment.



Medway Maritime Hospital's Engagement Team had a busy summer fostering community spirit and supporting important causes through a range of events.

Celebrating community spirit!



The Summer Fun Day was a hit, featuring stalls, live music, face painting, and activities by local groups. It gave visitors the opportunity to see the wonderful charities that support the hospital.

The event raised £463.50 for The Medway Hospital Charity, support patients, staff, and volunteers. The Medway League of Friends and the Oliver Fisher Special Care Baby Trust also benefited from money donated on the day. The event also showcased support from local services such as Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Kent Police Neighbourhood Task Force, and The Friends of Harvey, Emerald, and Milton Wards.



Staff also proudly took part in Medway Pride, parading through Rochester with local residents. Members of the hospital's LGBTQIA+ staff network, along with clinical, non-clinical staff, and Executive colleagues, showcased the Trust's commitment to inclusivity. Medway Maritime Hospital continues to champion inclusivity through initiatives like the NHS Rainbow Badge Scheme, ensuring a safe environment for all.

SAVE THE DATE!

Friday 22 November 2024

Members will have the opportunity to visit Lawrence Ward and Galton Day Unit and see for themselves how we care for patients with cancer.



Scan to watch some of the fun we had at Pride!



To stay updated and see highlights from our events, follow us on social media:

Medway NHS Foundation Trust Medway_NHS_FT MedwayNHS

Annual Members' Meeting 2024

Our thanks to all members and stakeholders who attended the Trust's Annual Members' Meeting in September.

We welcomed around 80 people in the hospital's restaurant to reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past year and to outline our plans for the year ahead.

Chaired by Trust Chair John Goulston, the meeting included a presentation from Chief Executive Jayne Black; the annual Quality Report delivered by Interim Chief Nursing Officer Sarah Vaux and agreement of the Annual Accounts for 2023/24.

Speakers Howard Cottam, Medical Director, Surgery and Anaesthetics, and Claire Leaney, Matron, Sunderland Day Case Centre (pictured) focused on improvements made in surgery over the past year. More patients are now being treated as day cases for hip and



knee replacements, reducing waiting times, and we are increasing our use of robotic surgery to assist with procedures in gynaecology and urology.

Visitors were also able to visit a number of stands promoting services within the hospital, such as our new patient portal Patients Know Best, and we took another opportunity to share our exhibition marking 25 years of maternity services at Medway Maritime Hospital from All Saints Hospital. There was also a chance to find out more about how our improvement programme Patient First helps us focus on the right priorities to make the biggest difference.

Our thanks also go to our partners at NHS Kent and Medway who joined us to share information with attendees about the Safe Havens and also to answer any questions on plans to reshape urgent care services in Medway and Swale; and to Healthwatch who also promoted their services.

You can view presentation slides from the event on our website www.medway.nhs.uk

Welcoming new university students to Medway

Starting university is an exciting time and we were among local groups and employers offering support and advice to students at the Universities of Medway Freshers' Fair on 18 September.

The Engagement team warmly welcomed to our stand 185 students studying a wide range of courses at the Medway campus, including Midwifery, Pharmacy, Nursing, Paramedic Science, Mechanical Engineering and Computer Science.

We shared information about local healthcare services, including physical and mental health provision and many students were keen to play our fun game, where they hooked a duck and then answered trivia questions about the hospital or local health services.

Our thanks to the universities for allowing us to join the Freshers' Fair and to all the students who stopped by to talk to us.



Students were able to find out more about careers in the NHS, volunteering at the hospital and some signed up to become a member of the Trust, which gives them the opportunity to:

- learn more about how the Trust and the wider NHS works
- become involved in plans for future development
- help us improve patient care by sharing feedback and ideas
- vote to elect the Council of Governors and stand for election as a governor.

Visit our website for more information www.medway.nhs.uk/membership

Please return
wheelchairs to
main reception



A lack of wheelchairs can have a significant impact on outpatient appointments and inpatient transfers.

If you are unable to return the wheelchair, let a member of staff or volunteer know.

Thank you