

anthem



AI investment speeds up lung cancer diagnosis

An investment in artificial intelligence is helping staff diagnose lung cancers and other issues quickly and accurately - Read more on page 3

Also in this issue:

A new campaign highlighting suicide prevention

The livestreaming technology opening theatres up to midwives

New roles to help patients with substance use issues



Dear reader,

Welcome to the winter edition of Anthem magazine.

As an organisation, we are in the midst of our winter season. The pressures we continue to experience are widely felt from our front of house departments throughout our hospital and community services. You will see lots of messages being shared on the trust's social media pages and with our local media about how we all can play our part, so please look out for those. Share them if you can.

This includes a new campaign – There's a UTC for that – with information about how the urgent treatment centres we run across the Tees Valley can help people with a range of minor injuries and illnesses.

Can I (as ever) add a heartfelt thank you to everyone working to support our services, communities and, of course, one another.

As ever, so much is happening across the organisation.

The recent festival of finance events are something we are very proud of.

First starting at our hospital sites at North Tees and Hartlepool in response to the rising cost of living, its success has now continued at our sites at South Tees Hospitals.

It has been fantastic to watch this grow into something so significant, not only for our staff but also our local businesses and support organisations. It's important as an anchor organisation and the largest employer in our community that we do all we can to support others.

In this issue, you will also find out about new artificial intelligence used by our teams across the group, helping our patients receiving chest x-rays. AI is offering real opportunities to guide and support our staff in their work and improve patient care.

You will read about various award wins, innovations and teams' successes. So much exceptional work is going on across the organisation, it is fantastic to see this being recognised both regionally and nationally.

This magazine is not only our way of updating you all about latest developments but celebrating our successes too. Please do share positive stories with us and we will look to include these in future issues.

Thank you,

Stacey Hunter

GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE



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Quicker diagnosis and treatment of lung cancers in Teesside – thanks to new artificial intelligence investment

Artificial intelligence (AI) is helping health staff diagnose lung cancers and other issues quickly and accurately – after being rolled out across Teesside.



Pictured: Clare Butt and Lorraine Hollings, radiology advanced practitioners at North Tees and Hartlepool.

The new technology is now in use for patients getting chest X-rays across University Hospitals Tees.

Clare Butt, advanced practitioner in radiology at North Tees and Hartlepool, said: "This is already supporting us in identifying potential issues straight away. This might not always be something we are initially looking for but which AI has helped to raise with us as a potential issue to look at.

"It's a tool to help guide us and find anomalies before a full radiological report is carried out by the team. It is also helping us to prioritise the most urgent images and ensure these are seen first."

"It is ultimately helping us diagnose issues at the very earliest opportunity and provide earlier treatment and improved health outcomes."

Dr Maya Jafari, consultant musculoskeletal radiologist at South Tees Hospitals, continued: "This is exciting times for our radiology departments. This artificial intelligence tool will help radiologists and radiographers responsibly and safely prioritise our chest X-ray workload and make sure we can quickly identify patients who need further tests or specialist appointments."



Pictured: The radiology team at South Tees Hospitals.

Patients can be referred to the lung health team for an X-ray through a number of places, including a GP or from hospital departments including emergency care, outpatients or as an inpatient.

Across the country, £21million in government funding was allocated to more than 60 NHS trusts across all regions of the country for the AI tool – to help with more than 600,000 chest X-rays performed each month in England.

Health teams' transformation of cancer services recognised with regional award

Health teams in Teesside who have come together over the last decade to transform cancer services have been recognised with the Northern Cancer Alliance Award.

The teams from University Hospitals Tees first came together 12 years ago to overcome potential challenges with diagnosing and treating more complex suspected lung cancers.

The respiratory team at North Tees and Hartlepool started performing what is known as navigational bronchoscopy. This is the use of very small flexible cameras and ultrasound through the lungs to reach smaller airways.

The service has been successful in finding more small abnormal areas in the lungs which may be cancerous.

Respiratory consultants Vandana Jeebun, Julia Dunleavy and Victor Chew attended the awards ceremony to accept the award.

Dr Jeebun said: "All those years ago, the team recognised the likely challenges they were going to face in the future to find these harder-to-reach suspected cancers in the lungs.

"They came together as a respiratory community, working with health experts across both health trusts who had

“ The service has been successful in finding more small abnormal areas in the lungs which may be cancerous. ”

incredible perseverance, commitment and drive, to become one of the first services in the UK to run something like this.

"Thanks to them, the service has helped diagnose many patients with early stage lung cancer that, without this service, may have needed more invasive tests with higher risks.

"Without it, patients may have been left waiting for subsequent further investigations only when issues had progressed, potentially causing more harm."

The teams work closely with staff across both organisations in respiratory, biomedical science, thoracic anaesthetists and the surgical team, radiographers and endoscopy teams.



Pictured: Vandana Jeebun, respiratory consultant.



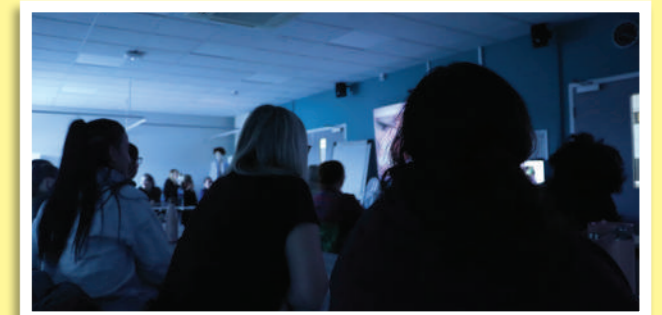
Pictured: Victor Chew, respiratory consultant.

Livestreaming technology opens hospital theatres up to aspiring midwives

Student midwives and resident doctors are benefitting from livestreaming technology as part of their training to get a real time glimpse into caesarean section (C-section) surgery.



Pictured: Teaching fellow Dr Alex Wilson, wearing the headset, and clinical educator Hannah Cussons.



Pictured: Participants in C-section training include student midwives, student nurses, resident doctors and physician associates.

The trust first implemented livestreamed training in January 2023 to showcase hip and knee replacements. Since then, the award-winning venture has been rolled out to maternity to give students an insight into C-section operations, with more than 100 students taking part so far.

The training involves a surgeon wearing a camera and microphone headset during a real C-section to livestream to around 30 students in an education room. With a point-of-view camera and precision zoom, students see exactly what the surgeon sees. The microphone offers two-way communication, allowing students to ask questions and the surgeon to answer in real-time as they perform the operation.

The use of this technology has opened surgical training up to a wider audience, where previously only one student at a time could attend theatres for training.

Midwife-turned-clinical educator Hannah Cussons is involved in organising the training, with support from consultants in obstetrics and gynaecology. She said: "I remember being a student midwife and I never, ever got up close and personal to that theatre table.

"I was a midwife for 13 years and I'd never seen a C-section so closely until we ran the pilot for this training.

"You can see it all so clearly and ask questions all the way through which really helps to put your theory into practice. It's a great introduction to surgery, is a much more comfortable environment and takes away that anxiety of being in a theatre."

36-year-old Paul Hogan is a third year medical student at Newcastle University. He recently took part in the training while on placement at the University Hospital of North Tees.

He said: "I love to be in theatre and either observing or even assisting if possible. However, there is very much a feeling of pressure not to be in the way and not to disturb anyone's concentration with questions.

"With this training, there's a lot less pressure. There was a clinician who was dedicated to ensuring that we got a good view and were kept informed about exactly what was happening and when. You feel much more open to asking questions and you still have a line of communication into the theatre."

The implementation of this training was recognised with a NHS England 'Enabling Effective Learning Environment Digital Placement of the Year' award in November 2023.

Latest 'festival of finance' event welcomes local businesses and groups from across the community

North Tees and Hartlepool once again welcomed a host of local businesses and groups from across the Tees Valley for its annual health and wellbeing event for staff.

The annual 'festival of finance' event was first set up to support colleagues across the organisation during a testing financial period, and is hosted in partnership with a number of businesses and charities across the region. The event helps provide money saving advice, guidance and access to exclusive special offers.

The festival, held in November at the University Hospital of Hartlepool and the University Hospital of North Tees, included support and advice from finance support, heating bills, citizens advice, therapy and carer support to will writing or getting on the property ladder.

Group chief executive Stacey Hunter, said: "It is important as a group that we look to offer support and advice for our staff to help their financial health and their wellbeing. Our staff are the heart of our hospitals and without them we would be unable to provide outstanding care to our patients.

"This annual event is a great way to invite local business, charities and support groups through our doors to offer this advice and guidance, and to do everything we can to support our staff.

"It is great to see just how many local businesses and groups got involved again this year."

Back for another year, Kwik Fit once again offered free winter car checks, alongside representatives from organisations such as the Hope Foundation, Utilita, Hartlepower, Hartlepool Borough Council and Stockton Borough Council and Miller Homes.

Cheryl Camilleri, resuscitation and simulation lead, said: "It was fantastic to see so many organisations come along to offer support and advice to staff like myself.

"It was also a great chance to find out more about some of the support on offer inside the trust and the brilliant work they are doing not just our patients but staff too."



Pictured: Resuscitation and simulation lead Cheryl Camilleri and health and wellbeing advisor Helen Waller.



Pictured: Representatives from Utilita talk to a staff member at the UHH event.



Pictured: Staff at the UHNT event.



Pictured: Miller Holmes at UHH.



Pictured: UHH staff explore stalls.



Pictured: UHNT staff with goodie bags.

Award-winning cancer team relaunches patient support group

A cancer service given a national award for its commitment to patients has relaunched group to offer those affected further support.

The haematology team re-formed the myeloma support group for the first time since the pandemic.

The group, held regularly at Butterwick Hospice is a place where patients with incurable blood cancer and their loved ones can support and advise one another.

The service was presented with the Myeloma UK Clinical Service Excellence Programme Award earlier this year for its efforts to improve patients' quality of life and eagerness to listen to their needs.

Haematology specialist nurses Kerry Watson, Maxine Cooke and Stephanie Herman and cancer care coordinator Kirsty McDougall welcomed everyone who came along.

Kerry said: "We are so pleased to have the myeloma support group back. We were actually overwhelmed by the amount of people who came along – it was a great success.

"There is a need for a group like this. Having cancer can be an isolating and lonely experience – the group is here."

Myeloma is especially hard to spot as the symptoms are often vague and dismissed as ageing or other minor conditions.

By the time many patients are diagnosed, their cancer has often advanced and they require urgent treatment. This can significantly impact their chances of survival and quality of life.



Pictured: Staff and patients at the launch of the group.



Pictured: The North Tees and Hartlepool myeloma team.



Pictured: Cancer pathway coordinator Emma Hall.



Pictured: Cancer multidisciplinary support team.

A day in the life of... a cancer pathway coordinator

Behind the scenes at North Tees and Hartlepool is a team dedicated to making sure cancer patients are getting the very best care possible.

The cancer multidisciplinary support team track patients through their cancer pathway – from urgent suspected cancer referrals and screening recalls, to treatment. While the team don't have contact with the patients they support, they are essential in ensuring that they get timely tests and investigations.

Emma Hall is a cancer pathway coordinator in the team, supporting patients undergoing investigations for colorectal cancers. We sat down with Emma to find out a little more about the vital work she does in her role...

What does your role as a cancer pathway coordinator involve?
Our role is to try and get people through their cancer pathway as quickly and efficiently as possible. We track patients in the trust who are on a suspected cancer pathway from their first appointment, through diagnosis, and until they start treatment.

For patients, going through a potential cancer diagnosis is a worrying time, and if they do get a diagnosis, the road to starting treatment is also stressful. That's why we are constantly contacting departments within the trust and our counterparts at other trusts to bring appointments and tests forward where we can to ensure seamless transition of care.

What does an average day look like for you?
Each day I will look at the patients who are on a suspected cancer pathway to check that they have investigations and appointments booked. I then work with the clinical and support teams to try and bring those forward.

A large part of our job is also collecting data for local and national audits and cancer waiting times for NHS England.

Everything we do is to make sure patients are getting tests and treatment as quickly as possible – to speed up that pathway.

How did you wind up in your role?
I was actually at university studying interior design when sadly my Mum passed away from cancer.

When I finished my degree, I saw the cancer pathway coordinator role advertised. I decided to apply due to my recent experience on a patient's side of the cancer pathway.

How does having that lived experience of supporting someone with cancer help in this role?
I think most people will know someone who has, at some point, been suspected of having cancer and been referred for tests. Having that experience of being on the patient's side means you understand the worry. You want to do the best for each patient, to lessen the anxiety they are going through. A lot of people in our team have had that experience of being on the other side.

With us not having patient contact, it could be quite easy to see somebody as just a name. But when you've been on the other side, you know how anxious patients can feel, you can relate to it, and it makes you want to do your best for them.

Family's heartfelt 'Chris's Voice' campaign highlights importance of suicide prevention

A powerful suicide prevention campaign, helping healthcare specialists to speak up and champion a patient's care, has been launched at the trust.



Pictured: The Irish family – Trish, Anna, Nicola, Rachel and Mick with colleagues from the emergency care department.

'Chris's Voice', an important campaign developed by the Irish family, was created after beloved brother and son Chris Irish sadly lost his life to suicide in 2021.

The campaign, started at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust in November, is about empowering healthcare professionals to positively look at ways to better advocate and protect vulnerable patients. It looks to raise awareness of where opportunities may be missed and where improvements can be made to help prevent suicide.

Rachel Irish, Chris's sister, has been a stalwart champion for Chris's Voice, promoting and developing the campaign with her family. She presented at the organisation's annual 'Celebrating Excellence' event in October ahead of the campaign launch.

Rachel said: "Chris was the youngest of four siblings and was deeply cherished by his parents Mick and Trish, nana Nancy and three sisters – Anna, Nicola and myself. Despite receiving warmth and support from his close-knit family, Chris faced

challenging mental health struggles for many years and sadly lost his battle in 2021.

"Our family developed the campaign, so that we could continue to be Chris's voice by sharing his story. It's important to highlight where opportunities were missed that may have prevented him from taking his own life.

"We hope to give other patients and families a voice and in turn, help to improve the care and support available for them."

The 'Chris's Voice' campaign is being rolled out across North Tees and Hartlepool and the family is also hoping to launch the campaign at Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust soon.

Rachel continues: "We want to encourage healthcare professionals to speak up if they disagree with a decision made regarding a patient's care. It's also about highlighting the importance of listening to families who know their loved ones best, better escalating care and liaising with other professionals to develop the best care plan and to ensure safer discharges.

"Through the campaign, we want to reduce the stigma associated with mental health and eliminate judgement.

"By continuing to speak passionately and advocating for Chris, we want suicide prevention and mental health to become part of everyday workplace conversations and to improve outcomes for patients so families don't have to go through the same loss that we have."

In England there were 6,069 confirmed deaths to suicide in 2023 (ONS). This is an average of 116 people dying every week. Suicide is the biggest killer of people under the age of 35 and the biggest killer of men under the age of 50.

Viv Priestley, service lead for urgent and emergency care, said: "Suicide, sadly, affects thousands of people every year in England.

"Ensuring our patients' safety when under our care is something every individual healthcare professional has a shared responsibility to do. We want our staff to be aware that it can be just as important to share information in certain circumstances as it is to protect confidentiality. This is supported by the Caldicott Principles.

"We hope to continue to welcome Rachel and her family to share Chris's story with staff, so we can work together to continue to improve and develop the very best care plan to support patients and their families experiencing a suicidal crisis.

"This is such an important campaign, and Rachel and her family's passion for improving suicide prevention for other patients is so inspiring."



Pictured: Chris's voice continues to be heard.

Whether it's you needing support, someone in your family, a friend or a work colleague remember, you are not alone.

The following organisations can all help anyone considering suicide:

1. The Samaritans – call 116 123 for immediate help or email jo@samaritans.org (24 hour response time)
2. NHS 111 – call 111 for immediate help
3. NHS help for suicidal thoughts web page – visit www.nhs.uk/mental-health
4. Your local GP

New team to help patients who have substance use issues

Hospital health workers are giving specialist help to patients with substance use issues as part of a new initiative.

The new roles are helping to identify patients in need and manage their hospital care, as well as supporting them once they are fit to be discharged from care.

Josh Le Darcy, Kirstie Mineham and Francesca Linacre have started their roles as substance use practitioners in October.

Hayley Tranter, the trust's alcohol lead nurse, and the rest of the alcohol team will work closely with the team to improve working between hospital and community substance misuse services.

Hayley said: "These roles will help give that vital specialist support to those of our patients who have substance use issues."

"Sadly, the North East has the highest rates of drug related health issues and substance use is rising across the country."

"Josh, Kirstie and Fran will use their experience and expertise to provide care and compassion to our patients who suffer with these issues."

The roles have been jointly funded by Stockton on Tees Borough Council and Hartlepool Borough Council.

Josh, who has worked in substance use for seven years across Middlesbrough and Hartlepool, said: "I have been a part of service developments across local authorities and now want to use that experience to help our patients here."

Kirstie has a health wellbeing and social care qualification and a background working at the Stockton Community Drug and Alcohol Service. She said: "I am passionate about working in substance use and helping those affected. I want our patients to get the highest standard of care throughout their recovery."

Fran, who has been an alcohol care team nurse at the trust for the last two years, said: "I have seen the level of need for a substance service here."

"I am excited to continue to positively impact patients' lives and helping those suffering from addiction. We will continue to provide education to colleagues around patients' substance use and advocate for our patients while they are in hospital."

The service will run seven days a week across the University Hospital of North Tees, working closely with departments like urgent and emergency care, hospital wards and community services to ensure patients get the right care both in hospital and in their homes.



Pictured: (Left to right) Substance use practitioners Francesca Linacre, Kirstie Mineham and Josh Le Darcy.



Pictured: Group chief information officer Ken Anderson speaks with a member of staff at the Friarage.

Our digital future

Digital transformation is at the heart of the NHS.

Indeed, digital plays such a key role that 'analogue to digital' is a core theme of the government's 10 Year Health Plan, due to be published in 2025.

And digital will be central to the development of our group.

Our new digital, data and technology strategy focuses on eight core themes which will have a long term impact on all areas of group activity:

1. Our patients, their families and carers
2. Our workforce
3. Our system leadership
4. Our data analytics
5. Our technology systems
6. Our technology infrastructure
7. Our security (cyber security and information governance)
8. Our digital innovation and research

Ken Anderson, group chief information officer, said: "You might be asking 'what does a digital strategy have to do with me?' The short answer: everything."

"Whether you personally interact with technology or not, digital is now the backbone of our hospital group. From payroll to electronic prescriptions, from rostering to patient records, digital is key to everything we do."

"Of course, I'm not expecting staff to rush to read a strategy document but I do want all colleagues to have an awareness of what is coming up for our digital future."

"In the coming year, I expect to see a removal of many barriers to enable more seamless working between the two trusts and the establishment of a single digital service team, including a single IT service desk. These innovations will bring positive change and, like everything we do, the primary beneficiary is the patient."

"Our digital team works hand-in-hand with clinical colleagues to ensure all our services maximise the benefit they can provide."

"Technology is never easy and some teething problems are to be expected as we all tackle the steep digital learning curve we will experience. But I'm convinced we have the right plan in place to deliver the digital improvements befitting a modern hospital group."

"I look forward to updating you on the progress of all of our key projects in the coming months."



Pictured: (Left to right) Registered nurse Stacey Hadlet, clinical lead IPU adults Lucy Henderson, registered nurse Donna Stephenson and health care assistant Lisa Finnie.

Trust and hospice partnership hits key milestone with 100th patient

The trust's work with Butterwick Hospice Care helping end of life care patients in Teesside has hit a key milestone – just a year after a new unit was opened.

The hospice's new adult in patient unit opened last summer thanks to its partnership with the trust. It has now helped 100 patients.

The new beds have been staffed by a team of health professionals and volunteers, including specialists from the trust.

Zoe Booth, palliative and end of life care lead at the trust, said: "We are absolutely delighted with how things have progressed since the unit opened. Feedback from patients and their relatives has been extremely positive and it is clear to us all how successful this has been so far.

"Since it opened, we are offering more beds to our patients and we continue to make plans to progress the service in the future."

Edward Gorringe, chief executive of Butterwick Hospice Care, said: "This has come about due to the hard work of our staff, the support of our partners, and the trust placed in us by our community.

"I personally have been humbled by the feedback we have received from patients and their families – a powerful reminder of why we do what we do."

Feedback from families

"To all of the palliative nurses who truly looked after my husband, you all made us smile. I would like to say a great big thank you... we are truly going to miss you all so much."

"We have seen first hand the absolute dedication of every single one of you. You all welcomed us and made us feel so relaxed in a very sad time for us. It has not been an easy time but you made certain that our wonderful Dad had a dignified and peaceful passing."

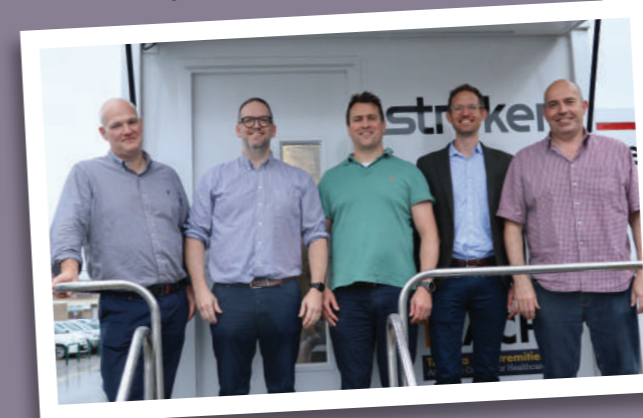
"Your love and compassion was second to none and you will stay in our hearts forever. We are forever grateful. Lots of love."



Pictured: Orthopaedic surgeon Richard Jeavons (right) teaching delegates at the event.



Pictured: Some of the health professionals who attended the training event.



Pictured: The surgeons who led the course.

Specialist training event for surgical staff held in Teesside

Health professionals specialising in elbow surgery came to Teesside as part of a bespoke training programme – one of the first of its kind in the area.

The North East elbow arthroplasty training event was hosted by the trust over two days.

The course for senior resident surgeons and surgical care practitioners included a state of the-art mobile training truck where doctors could practice techniques used in the operating theatre.

Richard Jeavons, consultant orthopaedic surgeon, who created and led the course, said: "We are proud to have hosted this event right on our doorstep in Teesside – training the next generation of elbow surgeons.

"It's a real achievement for us at the trust and a sign of the standing we have as an orthopaedic centre of excellence in the region.

"The course covered the treatment of elbow arthritis and complex elbow fracture injuries, replacing half a joint and a full elbow replacement – as well as much more.

"Resident surgeons and surgical care practitioners had the chance to learn from expert elbow surgeons. On top of that, thanks to the training truck provided by Stryker, trainees could become familiar with many of the tools and equipment used in surgery and could practise using these during special sessions."

Thank you to those involved in delivering the course, including orthopaedic surgeons:

- Professor Rajesh Nanda and Blair Tweedie from North Tees and Hartlepool
- Sam Vollans from Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Jonny Kent from North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust
- Aparna Viswanath and Jim McVie from South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Meet some of our dedicated fundraisers

Walking for breast cancer

A group of friends who hold an annual charity walk for breast cancer care did so again recently as part of an annual fundraiser.

The group, who walk from Hartlepool Marina to Seaton Carew and back again, raised £920 for breast care services. The group of 10 women, some who have had breast cancer themselves or had loved ones impacted by it, were joined by three year old Laura Harrington for the third consecutive



Fundraiser recognised with award

Lisa Rogers has been fundraising for North Tees and Hartlepool for more than three years in memory of her daughter, Nancy.

In the latest of her fundraising ventures, she donated £2,500 to support the refurbishment of the North Tees snowdrop suites for bereaved families. While presenting her donation, Lisa was surprised with a well deserved Teesside Hero Award from The Teesside Charity. She also received an additional £1,000 to add to her donation.



Porter raises funds in memory of mum

NTH Solutions porter John Doyle is well known across North Tees and Hartlepool for the charitable work that he carries out.

Most recently, he and a group of his friends and family carried out a fundraising walk from Redcar to Saltburn in memory of his mum, Ella. The trek raised a total of £1,200 for the North Tees haematology day unit.

Thank you to Blackwells butchers

A huge thank you to Blackwells butchers in Norton for their series of fundraising events over the past year.

From raffles, Easter tombolas, carol singing and BBQs – they've done it all in the year that also saw them celebrate their 70th anniversary.

The Blackwells team and their customers have raised more than £3,000 so far for our North Tees breast unit.



New staff welfare facility opens at North Tees

A new rest and recharge hub has opened in west wing at the University Hospital of North Tees – providing a much needed break-out space for staff and volunteers.

The room was officially opened in autumn and is already proving popular with staff.

The facility can accommodate up to 25 members of staff at a time and includes a kitchenette, TV and seating areas.

The project came to fruition after fundraising coordinator Suzi Campbell supported wards in west wing with their lunch round during a busy shift. Staff spoke candidly about the facilities that would be most beneficial to their health and wellbeing while on shift.

The facility was funded by and backed by NHS Charities. Together after North Tees and Hartlepool Together was successful in a bid application.

The room was funded using money raised by the late Captain Sir Thomas Moore. Construction work was carried out by Geoffrey Robinson Ltd and Manor Grange Construction Ltd.



Pictured: Senior clinical matron for responsive care Hayley Carrick (right) with NTH Solutions colleagues and members of the construction crew.



Pictured: Associate director of operations Natalie Wintersgill (centre) with catering team leaders Cindy Thomas (left) and Nicola Critchley (right).

NTH Solutions awarded for support to young adults with learning difficulties

NTH Solutions has been recognised with an award for the work it is doing to provide internships to young adults with learning difficulties, disabilities and/or Autism.

The company was awarded 'outstanding supported internship employer' at the inaugural Supported Internship Awards in October, hosted by NHS England Choices College.

NTH Solutions, which manages the North Tees and Hartlepool's estates and facilities, works closely with NHS England's Choices College to support students with additional needs in taking their first steps into their careers. Since the partnership began in early 2017, more than 40 students have completed work experience. Around 20 have since taken employment in roles in catering, portering, procurement and more.

Natalie Wintersgill, associate director of operations, said: "It is an absolute pleasure to be able to provide this opportunity to the students who form part of this initiative.

"It was an incredible honour to win this award and it was completely unexpected. The students are exceptional and

an absolute credit and I can't wait to see how far they can progress within this organisation, as well as others.

"This is something we're a huge advocate for and have a passion to extend this scheme as much as we can. The credit for the success of the students lies predominantly with all of the team within the operational areas. Thank you so much for your support and help with this."

Natalie represented NTH Solutions at the awards ceremony, alongside catering team leaders Nicola Critchley and Cindy Thomas.

The scheme offers an alternative route into working in the NHS, equipping interns with the practical experience and knowledge needed for their chosen future career. It creates a valuable career pathway for young people with learning difficulties, disabilities and/or Autism.

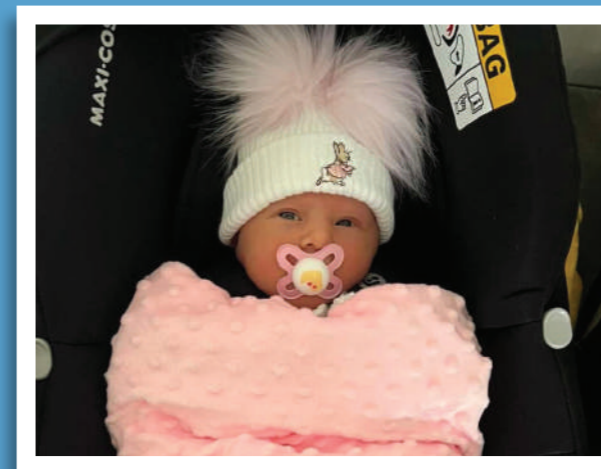
Family feedback: A spotlight on maternity

From the minute we stepped through the door, midwife Jade Sykes was amazing. Her care and compassion was just fantastic and she was there for anything we needed. You are an absolute credit to North Tees and I hope every lady has the same amazing birth experience.

And the student midwife Victoria was absolutely gorgeous too. She helped deliver my baby boy safely and she was so lovely.
- Jessica



Pictured: Midwife Jade Sykes and baby Jesse.



Pictured: Baby Adaline.

I would just like to thank the staff at the North Tees delivery suite.

A special thank you to midwives Sam and Faye for supporting me to deliver my beautiful daughter Adaline on Thursday 12 September. They explained everything and made me feel at ease even though my birth didn't go as I planned. They couldn't have done any more for me during my stay.

Also the staff on ward 22 for all the support with our daughter. Me and my partner Ryan can't thank everyone enough for making our daughter's journey into the world so special.
- Chloe

I would like to say a massive thank you and show my appreciation for the outstanding care I have received from maternity services. I needed to be induced and deliver my baby five weeks early due to complications with pre eclampsia.

A special mention to Anita, my community midwife, who has been there throughout everything and the rest of Rowan team at Hartlepool. Anita has provided me with exceptional care pre and post natal. She is a fantastic midwife and a lovely person.

A shoutout to Trish, Hannah, Elisha, Laura, Katie, Kayleigh and Claire from delivery suite for support during my induction and labour. Special mention to Vicky who commenced my induction and ensured I was informed and comfortable throughout, and Katie who broke my waters and helped me feel at ease during my epidural and

contractions. A massive thank you to Christina for delivering my baby safely. She was fantastic and a credit to the delivery suite.

All midwives have been amazing and I couldn't fault anything. I have been supported by great consultants Dr Bapir, Dr Wild, Dr Oo, registrar John and their whole team who have worked effortlessly to help welcome baby into the world five weeks early but safely.

My baby went onto the special care baby unit for a short period of time. Julie and Jenny were lovely and made me feel at ease about the whole situation. My baby was cared for by Lisa mainly who is the most lovely person and nurse. Julie, Zoe and Laura were also involved and I'm sure other nurses! They are the kindest, most approachable women I have met and, again, are an absolute credit.

I really couldn't fault any of the care myself or my baby received.

Surgery team's gold standard rating for patient safety

The surgery service at the University Hospital of Hartlepool has been highlighted as gold level by the National Joint Registry in its Quality Data Provider Awards.



Pictured: The surgery team at the University Hospital of Hartlepool.

The three-tier awards – gold, silver and bronze – are based on the monitoring of performance of hip, knee, ankle, elbow and shoulder joint replacement procedures. It helps improve clinical outcomes for the benefit of patients as well as supporting and giving feedback to orthopaedic clinicians and industry manufacturers.

The registry collects orthopaedic data in order to provide evidence to support patient safety, standards in quality of care, and overall value in joint replacement surgery.

The Hartlepool hospital site is the trust's centre for planned, non-urgent elective care. It was previously awarded the silver standard before improving its position to gold.

Linda Wildberg, clinical quality and data management lead, said: "This is fantastic news for the service and shows the outstanding care we provide to our patients."

"Patients need to know when they come in for an operation that we are taking every step to ensure they are safe.

"This gold level standard recognises this service as being among the very best. It is a sign of the dedication of the whole service, from the teams who see patients before their operation, to the surgery team and then staff who carry out the follow up care and who collate the data afterwards."

The centre was awarded elective hub status last year by NHS England – meaning it could increase capacity and give patients quicker access to non-urgent operations. This includes orthopaedic operations such as hip and knee replacements as well as gynaecology, surgical and breast procedures.

Celebrating our colleagues

Spotlight on our allied health professionals

As part of allied health professions (AHPs) day across England, North Tees and Hartlepool awarded some well deserved trophies to our AHP workforce.

AHPs make up the third-largest clinical workforce across the NHS and play a pivotal role in caring for patients.

Alan McDonald, associate director of AHPs, said: "This day is about celebrating the best of our colleagues and recognising the value they bring to our patients. I'm honoured to hand out these awards."

"All of our winners deserve to be highlighted but really, our entire team AHPs are winners in my eyes. They are an outstanding group of committed, compassionate and hardworking colleagues."



Love admin

The trust held its first Love Admin day in October to recognise our administrative and support teams.

The NHS has to be well organised and keep detailed records of patients and staff. Our administrative staff across North Tees and Hartlepool provide business support to clinical and non clinical staff.

Many also support patients as a first point of contact – that could be booking an appointment or getting advice.

Celebrating Excellence

Improving patients' experiences was the theme of the trust's latest Celebrating Excellence event. Colleagues were invited to share their improvement projects and the positive impact they have made to patient care and outcomes.

The morning session was a series of engaging presentations from colleagues who outlined their improvement projects including reducing post partum haemorrhaging, tackling the blight of smoking and how the high tech RealWear video headset is revolutionising clinical training (more on that on page 5).

In the afternoon, staff hosted a series of colourful stands to showcase their work which included the CareScan+ countdown screen, community stroke support and the chest pain clinic.



Community team helping patients manage heart health from home mark milestone anniversary

Since its launch 20 years ago, the heart failure service at North Tees and Hartlepool has become known for being leaders in its field.

The service has made significant advances, most recently leading the way in setting up means for patients to manage their condition from home.

Last year, the service was successful in a funding bid to NHS England to be an early adopter of a new way of working, Managing Heart Failure at Home. Patients use digital technology to monitor their condition, meaning patients and their loved ones can be given more timely and effective treatment. And this year the service was successful in further funding to carry on this way of working.

Heart failure specialist nurses Trudy Hunt and Karen Hann developed the service 20 years ago.

Trudy said: "We are so proud of the achievements made over the last 20 years – the team has helped improve the care of those patients diagnosed with heart failure.

"This new technology has helped patients take control of their health from home. Patients now have more confidence in managing their own condition, with support from one of the team's nurses."

Patients can download a special app on their phone or use a handheld device issued by the team. These both have easy to-use dashboards to record information about their heart, including blood pressure, heartrate, oxygen levels and weight.

Working with NHS owned digital health company HealthCall Solutions, the team was recognised earlier this year as a HealthTech Digital Award winner.

Trudy continued: "Thanks to the teams' efforts, patients are benefitting from better outcomes and an improved quality of life. We have worked collaboratively with the single point of access service, the triage team and Home First team to ensure the success of this initiative.

"The heart failure service is always striving for new ways of working to improve patient care, continually gathering patient feedback to improve the process. All care is personalised to meet the needs of our patients."



Pictured: The heart failure team.

HELP BUILD a health service fit for the future



Get involved now
change.nhs.uk



The government's Change NHS online portal is now open for members of the public, NHS staff and health experts to share their experiences, views and ideas for improving the NHS.

Stacey Hunter, group chief executive for University Hospitals Tees is appealing for local people to make their voices heard.

Stacey said: "This consultation will feed into the government's 10-Year Health Plan.

"It's vital that the views of people in the Tees Valley and wider region are heard and represented in the plan which will have huge implications for the future of healthcare throughout the country.

"It's your chance to tell the government what works well for you and your family, and what you wouldn't want to lose. It's also an opportunity to explain any frustrations you may have experienced and how you think things could be

improved. You might even have seen services outside of the NHS that you think could be incorporated into the health service.

"It's a once in a generation opportunity to let the government know about your experience of the NHS and your ideas to make it even better. I urge everyone to get involved and let government know your opinions."

The Change NHS consultation is online at www.change.nhs.uk and everyone is welcome to share their views and ideas for improving our health service.

Making the workplace a fairer and more open place for all

Traditional assumptions and outdated ways of working were challenged at a special event at a local hospital group.

University Hospitals Tees' first equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing conference saw staff from both North Tees and Hartlepool and South Tees Hospitals come together to learn and make real changes to how each trust has traditionally carried out their duties.

Rachael Metcalf, chief people officer for University Hospitals Tees, said: "It's vital that our workforce reflects the population we serve in order to create an environment where every colleague feels empowered and supported as an essential member of our team.

"Having a truly equal, diverse and inclusive workforce will help us to improve the experience of our patients.

"We know we have a way to go and that's why this conference was so important. We need to have honest, open discussion about how we work and how we can make things more open for all."

The conference, which took place at the STRIVE Academic Centre at The James Cook University Hospital, generated lively debate and discussion on a range of issues. This includes unconscious bias, health inequalities, creating a fair organisation and improving the workplace culture.

Rachael commented: "We are looking closely at the feedback from everyone who attended, as well as from colleagues who weren't there by using the staff survey responses to establish the areas we need to focus on.

"Our ambition is to make equality, diversity and inclusion part of everyday business and everyone's responsibility."



Pictured: Rachael Metcalf, chief people officer for University Hospitals Tees.



Pictured: Staff at the equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing conference.



Barcode technology innovation recognised with regional award

North Tees and Hartlepool has been recognised for its success in using barcode technology to further improve the overall care it gives to patients.

Working alongside Global View Health Care, the trust has been recognised both regionally and nationally for its innovative work on CareScan. Most recently, the team behind CareScan was winner of the 'demonstrating an impact upon patient safety' category in the Bright Ideas in Health Awards.

This award recognised the positive impact of CareScan, a programme which uses barcodes and scanners to track surgical products and devices during the delivery of patient care. It supports decision making by ensuring surgical implants are safe and appropriate – helping to reduce the risk of preventable incidents known as 'never events.'

Tony Naylor, the trust's CareScan lead, said: "This award highlights our dedication to innovation, collaboration and research.

"CareScan is helping further improve the outstanding care our teams already provide. By working closely with our clinical and support teams, we have improved patient safety. CareScan is used daily by our teams in operating theatres, supporting them in the vital work they do.

"We are delighted and honoured to once again be recognised with an award for the positive impact it has made."

CareScan was jointly recognised in its category along with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust for improvements to the in patient care of people with Parkinson's.

Two other teams in the trust were shortlisted for awards. The end of life care team was recognised for their work improving care for patients with a cancer of the lining of the lungs and the education team for work providing T Level placements to young people interested in a career in the NHS.



Pictured: The CareScan team won the 'demonstrating an impact upon patient safety' award in the Bright Ideas in Health Awards

Get involved

As a NHS trust, we are proud of the work we do to keep our local population healthy.

But to keep learning and improving, it's vital that we involve the public as much as possible in our daily work.

If you have family and friends whose opinions and experiences could help us become even better at what we do, please encourage them to consider the following options to get involved with trust life.

Become a member

Trust members help to develop services for the future and can vote for governors. Members can stand to be a governor and play an even larger role in the trust.

Trust members help improve our services and future developments.

To find out more about becoming a trust member, email nth_tr.membership@nhs.net or phone 01642 624506.

Involvement bank

"We are committed to learning from our patients. How else can we truly learn and improve?" That's the view of lived experience lead Kenneth Achinewhu about the trust's patient involvement bank.

Our patient-led involvement bank is a chance to:

- Take part in visits and inspections
- Provide feedback based on your treatment
- Design quality improvement projects
- Help improve our services

To find out more about the involvement bank, please email: nth_tr.pppleinvolvement@nhs.net.

Friends and family survey

The friends and family survey provides patients and their families an opportunity to offer swift comment on the care we provide.

After any appointment or stay with us, patients will receive a text with a link to a brief online survey to offer your honest feedback. Paper forms are also available in all wards and departments.

"Consider the following options to get involved with trust life."



Pictured: We work with our involvement bank and people with lived experience to improve our services.



Pictured: Students taking part in induction exercises



Pictured: T level students listen to a presentation by the trust's freedom to speak up guardian

Welcoming our new T Level students

Our latest intake of T Level students attended their induction in autumn, as part of our T Level in health industry work placement programme.

The induction took place in the trust's new state of the art Health and Social Care Academy at the University Hospital of Hartlepool, welcoming students from Hartlepool Sixth Form, Hartlepool College of Further Education and Stockton Riverside College.

Education leads introduced the students to the trust, took the time to orientate and go through what their coming year will look like, while also presenting the newly developed T level handbook and sharing each individual's upcoming placements with them.

Education lead Emma Davies said: "It was great to meet our latest intake of T Level health students and to continue to build upon the great partnership working with our local colleges.

"We also have additional placement areas on board this year, so we're thrilled to be offering our students the chance to gain experience in some different areas including the emergency department, paediatrics, maternity and surgery.

"We're also particularly excited that we will be building upon this success and welcoming our first cohort of T Level placements in business admin in January."

The new students were also joined by freedom to speak up guardian Jules Huggan and health and wellbeing advisor Helen Waller, who presented on how students can access wellbeing support and raise any issues they may have during the duration of their placements at the organisation.

Emma concluded: "A huge welcome to our new students and we wish you every success with your studies and placements this year!"

Hospital chaplain accepts official licence in special service

A hospital chaplain was joined by members of the church, healthcare colleagues and members of the community as part of a special service to officially accept her licence

Jane Easterby has worked as a hospital chaplain at the trust since May 2019, and was ordained in June 2019. As a newly ordained member of the clergy, Jane was attached to a local Church of England parish as a Curate, while also working for the trust as chaplain. As Jane completed her time as a curate this summer, she could now be licensed as the Anglican Chaplain in the trust.

The special common worship licensing service was led by the Archdeacon of Auckland, the venerable Rick Simpson and attended by Revd. Paul Neville of Holy Trinity with St. Mark in Fairfield and congregation members from Holy Trinity with St Mark and St Mary's and St Michael's in Norton.

Archdeacon Rick welcomed everyone to the service, which included hymns, a reading and sermon as well as the all-important declaration of assent by Jane, who formally accepted and signed her licence.

Rick said: "Hospitals are inescapably bodily places full of human beings, with often very anxious minds and hearts. And in the midst of this, Jane is here, present. Jane cannot be replaced by Gideon Bibles by the bedside.

"It's a pleasure to have been invited here today. It's such a powerful thing to have a community gathered here to celebrate Jane's licensing and to acknowledge the importance of the contribution she makes to support patients in need."

Jane's journey to ordination began over 20 years ago after having a varied career which began within international sales in the textile industry and teaching in academia. She then worked for some time as the warden/director of Shepherds Dene Retreat House in Northumberland before finally being accepted for the ordination training programme in 2017.

Jane said: "My journey to this point has been many years in the making. To have been ordained and to have found my place working within the hospital is to finally be where I feel God wants me to be.

"It's been a lovely day celebrating this milestone with my family, friends, trust colleagues and members of my church's congregation.

"I feel a profound sense of calling to work with patients at the end of life and their families. It can be the most difficult of jobs and the most challenging, but is a great privilege and also immensely rewarding."



Pictured: Hospital chaplain Jane Easterby accepts her official licence.



Pictured: (Left to right) Midwife Eden Bruce, midwifery assistant Hannah Pickering and midwife Gail Lang.

Pregnant women benefitting from water-based classes

Pregnant women in Peterlee have been praising new water-based classes led by a team of community midwives.

The aquanatal classes launched in July, as a way of giving women a chance to exercise their body and mind.

They are held at Peterlee Leisure Centre every Thursday at 10am in four week blocks, for women at least 12 weeks pregnant.

Midwives Eden Bruce and Gail Lang and midwifery assistant Hannah Pickering are all qualified to run the classes.

Gail said: "Since the classes started we have had fantastic feedback from our women.

"They guide women through a range of exercises, using water to provide that extra support and help women stay active during their pregnancy. The classes have made them laugh and have been fun. They have loved the interaction, it has improved their experience of pregnancy and they have built up friendships.

"We want to make sure that every pregnant woman in Peterlee knows about this and don't miss out on this opportunity."

The classes are £3 per session and can be booked through the Peterlee midwifery team by calling 01429 522270.

Feedback from expectant mums

"Just a moment to thank Gail, Eden and Hannah for the classes, they have been the highlight of my week, always fun and a laugh really helps with the physical issues of pregnancy."

"I have really enjoyed every session and it has been nice to meet other expectant mums, everyone has been really nice and welcoming."

"The offer for aquanatal is a great idea for local pregnant women, the benefits are excellent and the staff knowledgeable, friendly, approachable. The class size is perfect and helped build friendships."



For more information about support for women during pregnancy, scan the QR code with your phone.

A day in the life of... a volunteer driver

When 65-year-old Robbie Earl left work for health reasons, he looked to his local NHS trust for a voluntary role to fill his newfound free time. The mention of a driving role sparked his interest and he's been a volunteer driver with North Tees and Hartlepool for over three years now.

Robbie provides a vital transportation service for hospital patients – helping them get to and from their outpatient appointments, delivering medication to their homes and collecting orthotics equipment when it is no longer needed.

The service was set up in 2013 with just six drivers. As the service passes its first decade, it has grown to 27 volunteers with more than 600,000 miles under their belts.

We sat down with Robbie to find out a little more about how he got involved in volunteering and what being a volunteer driver entails...

What made you become a volunteer driver?

I packed in work due to ill health and I just wanted to go out and give something back.

I had the time on my hands and thought I'd have a look and see what volunteering there is at North Tees and Hartlepool. I knew they had volunteers because I'd seen them on the wards so I had a look on the website and got in touch with the team.

When I came in to meet the volunteer team, they said they were looking for drivers and it just went from there. You get your checks done and then they look at your car, make sure it's taxed and insured – it's quite an easy process.

What does an average 'shift' look like?

I come in twice a week – Tuesdays and Thursdays. But you can do the hours you want, whichever days you choose.

As soon as I come in, I'll ring up switchboard, let them know I'm here and they'll check and see if there's any jobs in. We take patients home, bring them in to appointments and deliver medication. We can go as far as Shotton, Peterlee and Blackhall.

What keeps you coming in?

I just love doing it – especially taking the elderly people. They might not see anyone else for a few days and they all really appreciate what we do.

One gentleman from Blackhall has been coming in a few times a week to haematology for months and months now. He knows all the drivers and we all have craic with him when we take him home. He'll tell you jokes and stories on the way back and his outlook is brilliant – he loves having craic with the lads.

If you can help others and put smiles on the faces of people that are in a less fortunate position than yourself, it gives you a good feeling. That's what it's all about.

I'm going to do this for as long as I can.



Pictured: Robbie Earl.

“To find out
more about becoming a
volunteer driver, email
nth-tr.volunteersnth@nhs.net
or call
01642 383933.”



Pictured: John Blenkinsopp, clinical effectiveness advisor.

NHS trainer leading acclaimed national course for health staff

A trainer who has delivered his acclaimed course to thousands of health staff plans to expand it further over the coming months.

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

John regularly runs introductory critical appraisal training – something all healthcare professionals need to have.

The one-day workshop gives an intensive overview of the skills needed and resources available for critical appraisal and how these can be applied in the workplace. The session includes a mixture of teaching, workshops and discussion around post-course support and future plans.

John explained: “The course is something I have delivered to healthcare workers across the country since 1998.

“It has grown, mainly through word of mouth, since that time. I want to make sure it is known about by as many healthcare workers as possible.

“I also run other courses in critical appraisal, including advanced courses, facilitating courses and revision courses. There is a huge demand for critical appraisal as there are only two or three courses available nationally.”

For more information, upcoming training dates and booking information, scan the QR code with your phone.



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to quit smoking.
Do it for your
health.”**

**Tony, diagnosed with
throat cancer aged 52**

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