


news

@ Medway

Spring 2024



'A simple
blood test
really could
save your
life...'

Inside: Lowering patient anxiety
with virtual reality

How animal therapy is
boosting patient recovery

Proud to serve

Here at Medway we have much to be proud of – from staff who go above and beyond, to teams who are recognised for best practice in clinical care. Turn to page six to see just some of the excellent awards that our staff have received recently.

I am proud of the many ways that our staff put patients first – from using virtual reality technology to calm patients' fears during a procedure, to brightening patients' days with a visit from Pets as Therapy dogs and even a pony!

One of the many joys of my role is to see the improvements that we are making to our hospital, making it a better place to work and be treated. This includes the first phase of an exciting new 32-bed cardio-respiratory village, due to open this Spring.

The work doesn't stop there. Our critical care unit, which cares for some of our sickest patients, has had a welcome makeover, with calming new artwork and improved facilities for relatives and staff. And we're making it easier for people to access all five levels of the hospital in one journey, which is not currently possible, thanks to two new lifts.

Some of our improvements are thanks to the generosity of others. From life-saving new equipment bought by the Medway League of Friends, to new double cots that make it possible for premature twins and triplets to be kept side-by-side, thanks to The Oliver Fisher Special Care Baby Trust.

Other improvements are made possible by people who are motivated to give something back by undertaking extraordinary feats to raise money for the Medway Hospital Charity. Good luck to Tracey Daniel who is running The London Marathon to show her appreciation for her father's cancer



treatment and her mother's care following two strokes.

Finally, this July marks the 25th anniversary of the transfer of maternity and neonatal services from All Saints to Medway. We'd love to hear from you if you, or your children, were among the last babies to be born at All Saints Hospital in Chatham, or the first to be born at Medway Maritime Hospital.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of News@Medway.

Jayne

Jayne Black
Chief Executive



Welcome Hugo!

I was very excited to have a go at using Hugo, our new robotic-assisted surgery (RAS) device.

As well as being the second Trust in the UK to adopt Hugo, it is also our second surgical robot, following the introduction of the Da Vinci robot in 2017 which has so far carried out more than 1,500 urology and colorectal procedures.

Keep your eyes peeled for more details of this exciting addition in an upcoming issue of News@Medway.

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Access all areas!

A £1.8 million project to build two new lifts in the hospital is nearing completion. The work started in October 2022 and is funded from the Trust's capital budget.

The two new lifts will mean patients, visitors and staff will be able to access all five levels of

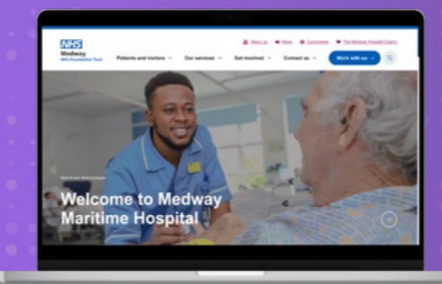
the hospital in one journey, which is not currently possible.

One of the lifts will be fire rated meaning it can be used during a fire evacuation and firefighting.

The lifts are expected to be in operation later this spring.



Check out our new website



Make sure you check out our new hospital website. We've worked hard to make it easier to find the information you need and to make its contents accessible to all users.

The work doesn't stop here as we're doing more to make it easier to search for information and apply for jobs with us. We are also testing the new site with members of the public so that we can continue to make it easier for you to find the information you need.

www.medway.nhs.uk

Bright future for hospital light scheme



More than 1,600 LED lights have been installed across the hospital thanks to £175,000 from the NHS Energy Efficiency Fund.

The two-week project involved installing the lights in our Estates offices, maternity areas and a number of smaller areas not covered in Phase 1.

By making this change it is estimated 25 tons of CO² will be saved each year.

Phase 1 of the project took place in 2020 with more than 7,000 lights changed to LED.



Increase in childhood infections

Outbreaks of childhood infections like measles and whooping cough are rising across the country.

To make sure children have the best protection, parents are being urged to check either their child's red book or with their GP to see if they have missed any vaccines.

Information about vaccinations and when to have them can be found on the NHS website.

How virtual reality technology is helping patients during medical procedures

Virtual reality technology is helping to keep patients calm and alleviate their pain while they have image guided procedures carried out under local anaesthetic.

By Hayley Pierre



"...the hope for the future is to be able to offer TVR in other areas so even more patients, including children, can benefit."

- Pictured left: Andrea Hattabi, Senior Sister for Interventional Radiology, with patient Eric wearing the virtual reality headset.
- Pictured right: Eric during the procedure with the Interventional Radiology Team.

Medway is believed to be the only NHS hospital in the country to offer therapeutic virtual reality (TVR) to patients undergoing Interventional Radiology (IR) procedures such as angioplasty, stent changes and inserting feeding tubes.

Research shows TVR helps the patient to relax and recover as it helps to lower anxiety levels and pain, which in turn also helps lower a person's blood pressure.

Since it was introduced last August, more than 200 patients have benefitted from TVR which sees them watching a virtual reality environment through a headset worn during their procedure. There are eight different virtual reality environments to choose from - underwater, a sunny beach, walking in a forest in the summer or in the winter, a lake, zen garden, summer time and winter time. Sounds that accompany each of the themes plays through the headset or patients can choose to wear headphones. When this happens the staff member operating the tablet wears a headset with a microphone so they can communicate with the patient.

Eric Hitchcock (pictured above), who had his bladder removed in 2009 due to bladder cancer and only has one kidney operating at nine per cent, has to have two tubes that help drain urine into a bag changed every six weeks. The procedure can be quite painful, uncomfortable and tiring but TVR has transformed his experience.

The 72-year-old said: "Before I used to tense up because I knew what was coming. Now I don't feel a thing because I'm concentrating on the scene in the headset and I'm relaxed. It's definitely helped me a lot."

Andrea Hattabi, Senior Sister for Interventional Radiology, who was instrumental in bringing TVR to the hospital, said: "Using the headset helps block pain receptors and helps patients to take their mind off of what is happening. You can see that it works because the machines show their vital signs stabilise during the procedure while wearing the headset.

"We're already talking to other teams across the hospital who are interested in using TVR in their service, so the hope for the future is to be able to offer TVR in other areas so even more patients, including children, can benefit."



Celebrate with us!

Shining a light on some of our recent achievements.



International recruitment work recognised

The NHS Pastoral Care Quality Award has been awarded to us in recognition of our work in international recruitment and the physical and emotional support we provide to overseas staff when they join the Trust.

Support offered includes in-house training and support for internationally educated nurses and midwives taking the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), which is required for registration in the UK, plus a buddy peer support programme.

We also offer support with flights, transport, and accommodation, and provide a welcome pack which includes groceries or food vouchers, bedding, toiletries and kitchen wear, as well as a booklet filled with information about the local area, finances, local facilities, travel and general information on living in the UK.

Last year, from 1 January to 31 December 2023, we welcomed 166 internationally educated nurses and midwives from Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Nepal and Pakistan.



National recognition for supporting newly registered healthcare professionals

The National Preceptorship Interim Quality Mark has been awarded to us for the support we provide to newly registered healthcare professionals.

Preceptorship provides a period of guidance, support and structured learning to help newly registered healthcare professionals, such as nurses, midwives and Allied Health Professionals (AHPs), to develop their knowledge and skills in their first year to ensure they can work as confident and competent practitioners as they transition from student to professional.

The Quality Mark, which is the national gold standard, was created in October 2022 when NHS England introduced the new national preceptorship framework for nursing as part of its plan to improve retention rates and improve the experience of new registrants. It is now used by Trusts across the country to benchmark themselves against.



Anaesthetists praised for high-quality care

Our Anaesthetic Department has received the prestigious Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCoA) Anaesthesia Clinical Services Accreditation (ACSA) – demonstrating a commitment to patient safety and high-quality care.

Medway is just the second NHS Trust in Kent to be presented with the accreditation. To receive it, departments are expected to demonstrate high standards in areas such as patient experience, patient safety and clinical leadership.

To mark the achievement, colleagues from the Perioperative and Critical Care (POCC) Team were joined by RCoA Council member, Dr Ashwini Keshkamat, at a special ceremony to unveil a commemorative plaque.



Gold award for Trust's commitment to joint replacement surgery

We have been awarded 'Gold' status as a National Joint Registry (NJR) Quality Data Provider.

The 'NJR Quality Data Provider' award scheme offers hospitals a blueprint for reaching patient safety standards in relation to joint replacement surgery, and rewards those who have met the targets for achieving gold, silver or bronze status.

In order to achieve 'Gold', we had to achieve a 99 to 100 per cent compliance rate for the number of joint replacement procedures submitted to the registry matching the number carried out and recorded on our Patient Administration System (PAS).

Special award for our healthcare support workers

Four of our healthcare support workers (HCSWs) have received an NHS England Chief Nursing Officer Award for their compassion and vital contribution to the NHS.

Gemma Heale, who works on the neonatal unit; Alison Simpson, who worked on McCulloch Ward and Monica Ioan, who worked on the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at the time they were both nominated, and Yvonne Horsley, who works on Trafalgar General High Dependency Unit (GHDU), were selected from nominations submitted by their colleagues and managers.



The awards aim to reward and recognise the vital contribution made by HCSWs in England to nursing and midwifery practice. Only a few are awarded each year.

'A simple blood test really could save your life'

A cancer survivor is appealing to men in Medway and Swale to make sure they know the signs of prostate cancer before it's too late.

By Hayley Pierre

David Lamkin booked an appointment with his GP after his wife Teresa noticed he was urinating more at night time. He was diagnosed and treated for prostate cancer within four weeks after his GP referred him to the our urology team due to the results of his PSA blood test showing high levels of protein, which can be a sign of prostate cancer.

The 65-year-old said: "My advice to any man who is having problems in the bladder area is to speak to your GP as soon as possible. Early intervention is absolutely key with any form of cancer to ensure a better outcome."

Five days after he was referred to the urology department, David was sent for an MRI scan. Eight days later biopsies were done. A week later David and his wife Teresa attended a hospital appointment during which Professor Martin Sheriff confirmed he had prostate cancer.

Signs of prostate cancer can include:

- Needing to pee more often than usual, especially at night.
- Difficulty peeing – for example, a weak flow or having to strain to start peeing.
- Feeling like you have not completely emptied your bladder.
- An urgent need to pee.
- Blood in your urine or semen.
- Rarely, pain when peeing or ejaculating.



He said: "We were taken to a side room and introduced to our wonderful Straight to Test Urology Clinical Nurse Specialist Bakani Moyo who spoke to us about everything that would be happening. My wife and I sat there laughing and joking because it just didn't seem right but when we left with all the leaflets and booklets we were both numb.

"Driving home we sat in silence but when we got home and spoke to our two sons we both cried."

Due to the stage of David's cancer the only option was surgery to remove the prostate and the lymph nodes in the groin and stomach area.

On 13 February David was admitted for minimally invasive surgery carried out using a surgical robot called Da Vinci. The system has replaced open surgery with small incisions meaning patients experience less pain, go home sooner and have less chance of needing follow-up surgery or experiencing a complication, such as a postoperative infection.

David was sent home two days later under the care of the SMART Team who provided him with some equipment so they could monitor him virtually. He is now on the road to recovery but will be monitored on a yearly basis.

He added: "Cancer is a scary word but if any men have any concerns about their prostate I strongly encourage them to book an appointment with their GP as soon as possible. A simple blood test really could save your life, just like it did mine."

For more information about prostate cancer visit Macmillan Cancer Support's website.

- Cancer survivor David Lamkin, pictured with wife Teresa (inset and front cover)

Our vision for the future revealed in new Clinical Strategy

It's an exciting time for the Trust as we launch our new Clinical Strategy. This is a document which sets out clearly how we intend to transform the services that we offer patients, using innovation and new technology, to deliver top quality healthcare.

The strategy defines our overall vision, and our aims and ambitions, for each of our services and specialties over the next three, five and 10 years.

It explains how we want to make Medway and Swale a place where people are empowered and encouraged to look after themselves and others, with services that are accessible and delivered equally well across the area.

Chief Medical Officer Alison Davis said: "This is a pivotal moment for us. Considerable research and work has gone



into creating this new strategy and we are very proud of the commitments we are making to improve care and outcomes for our local population.

"We are ambitious and while we know that some of our services are already excellent, we know we have work to do on others. I would like to thank everyone who took the opportunity last year to share their views with us to help shape this strategy. Your input was very valuable, and we are confident that our final strategy reflects the issues that matter most to you."

We are inviting patients, residents and stakeholders to join us in marking the launch of the Clinical Strategy at a special event in the hospital on Friday 10 May, during which we will be showcasing some of the advances already made through innovation and technology to transform our services. Details of how you can get involved and book a place will be published on our website and social media channels.

Key points about our Clinical Strategy:

- We've benchmarked our aspirations against national and world leaders, and are aiming to be among the top performers in many areas.
- We have carefully considered the changing needs of the growing population of Medway and Swale (Sittingbourne and Sheppey).
- We will refresh the strategy in 18 months to make sure it remains relevant and on track.
- We've made sure our Clinical Strategy aligns with the Kent and Medway Integrated Care System (ICS) Strategy and the NHS Long Term Plan.
- The strategy has our improvement programme, Patient First at its heart.



Virtual ward praised for boosting patient's recovery at home

A long-serving NHS worker-turned patient, has thanked our virtual ward team for helping her get back on her feet, in familiar surroundings at home, after a major operation.

Carole Jordan, 62, from Chatham, spent just two days in hospital following a hip replacement. She praised virtual ward staff for their 'kind care' and 'professionalism'.

The ward clerk who has worked for the hospital for more than 20 years, said: "Having had a hip replacement, I spent a couple days in hospital on Ocelot Ward. Then, the virtual ward team looked after me at home. The experience was excellent. I give my sincere thanks to everyone involved. A physiotherapist, clinical support worker and clinical sister monitored me at my house. They were all very knowledgeable with their advice and helped ease my worries.

"The staff were so kind and patient

with me, and their professionalism really stood out. Despite working at the hospital myself for so many years, I didn't know much about this service, but now I would recommend it to anyone."

Patients using the hospital's virtual ward are cared for by the Surgical, Medical and Acute Recovery Team (SMART) which is made up of nurses, consultants and therapists who provide a range of nursing, therapy care and remote monitoring using state-of-the-art technology. This allows patients to continue their recovery at home safely and conveniently, rather than being in hospital.

Last year the SMART Team played a major role in helping the NHS deliver its national ambition of rolling out 10,000 virtual beds, and it continues to care for hundreds of patients every month through remote monitoring and home visits. During a six-month period alone last winter, Medway's team cared for 356 patients, and performed 2,400 visits, with many carried out virtually through the use of remote monitoring, video and telephone calls. As well as it being better for patients, it helped save more than £100,000 of costs associated with a hospital ward stay. On average a hospital ward stay costs £657 a day, compared to £187 in a virtual ward.



New double cots allows more premature triplets and twins to be kept side-by-side

By Hayley Pierre

Triplets and twins needing neonatal intensive care can continue to develop their special bond thanks to two new double cots bought by a charity for our special care baby unit.

It means the unit can lay more than one set of multiple births side-by-side, just like they would in the womb, thanks to The Oliver Fisher Special Care Baby Trust buying the special cots. Previously the unit only had one double cot.

The cots, which are for babies who don't need to be in an incubator, are wider than an average neonatal cot meaning it not only makes it easier for parents to see their children together,

but can also help with the babies' recovery as research shows that when they are kept close they're more likely to have a stable heart rate due to their stress levels being lower.

Sandeep Kaur's triplets, Akaal Singh, and Harnaam and Sahai Kaur, were settled next to each other in one of the cots while they were on the unit after they were born at 30 weeks and one day on 10 December 2023 weighing 3lbs, 2lbs 3ozs and 1lbs 7ozs.

She said: "The double cots are just great.

"When you have three babies on the unit you can place a chair between two of the cots and sit with two of them but when the other one is in another cot across the room you feel like you're leaving them out so to be

able to have your babies all together in one cot makes a big difference."

Sophie Theed's twin girls, Billie and Harper, were also in one of the cots together during their stay on the unit after they were born at 26 weeks and one day on 2 November 2023 weighing 1lbs 9ozs and 1lbs 8ozs.

"Having them lying side-by-side in one cot was fantastic because it meant their dad and I could both sit with them and talk to them and care for them at the same time, which you couldn't do so easily if they had been in separate cots. It certainly helped with our stress levels too," she said.

In addition, the charity bought 10 single cots which can be raised and lowered to any height, to replace all of the unit's old bassinet style cots.



• Sandeep Kaur with her triplets Akaal Singh, Harnaam and Sahai Kaur in their double cot



• Sophie Theed holds her twin girls Billie and Harper

Share your stories and photos to mark 25th anniversary

It's hard to believe but Sunday 7 July 2024 marks the 25th anniversary of maternity services and the neonatal unit transferring from All Saints Hospital in Chatham to Medway Maritime Hospital.

As part of our planned celebrations, we'd love to hear from you if you were among the last babies to be born at All Saints Hospital or the first babies to be born at Medway Maritime Hospital or transferred to the neonatal unit.

We'd also like to see any old photos of All Saints Hospital that you would be willing to share with us to use in a special exhibition which our maternity and neonatal teams will be hosting in



the Atrium (Level 2 Green Zone) from 10am to 4pm on Monday 8 July. Please note, due to copyright laws the photos must belong to you or have been taken by you.

From photos to stories, and even memorabilia, if you have something you'd like to share with us, or you'd like to get involved with our plans to mark the anniversary, please email the Trust's Communications Team, and include your name and contact details, before 5pm on Wednesday 1 May 2024 – communications.medwayft@nhs.net



New online patient engagement portal

Patients can now access their own hospital appointments thanks to the launch of the new online patient engagement portal Patients Know Best (PKB).

Since launching last October, 132,000 people across Medway have registered to access their healthcare through the portal.

People can use Patients Know Best to view appointments, appointment letters, discharge summaries and more, by quickly registering through the NHS app or the dedicated Patients Know Best website for Medway.

In addition, the new portal supports the Trust's Green Plan by reducing the number of letters sent out, as patients can quickly access vital appointment and clinical information digitally which minimises delays with a reduced carbon footprint.

As the portal develops, patients will be able to view results letters from different specialities such as radiology and endoscopy.

Gavin MacDonald, Chief Delivery Officer, said: "I'm delighted we

are able to offer Patients Know Best to people in Medway. Introduced by the Trust to improve patient care, it is accessible on a range of devices and at any time.



"Providing the best of care to our patients is a key priority for us and Patients Know Best will allow patients to manage their healthcare records and control who they share information with at all times."

Your say

Tell us about your experience!

Thank you once more to everyone in the Medway Maritime Hospital team for participating. Team members are incredibly supportive and, importantly, recognise the value of the young people on the #SupportedInternship programme!



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.

Find out how to complete the Friends and Family Test: www.medway.nhs.uk/have-your-say

 Medway NHS Foundation Trust

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 MedwayNHS



Medway Hospital staff are some of the best in the country. I have not only been a patient but family and friends have as well. The care has always been excellent even under the most difficult of situations. Everyone there deserves recognition.

We massively appreciated the free parent meals during our stay on Dolphin Ward. One less thing to think about during a stressful time, and the kitchen staff were great nothing was too much for them.



Cardio respiratory village to open this spring

An exciting project to create a new 32-bed ward for our cardio respiratory patients is nearing completion and expected to open this spring.

The work to transform the area previously known as Ruby Ward, was made possible thanks to funding awarded by NHS England last year, and will allow patients with heart and breathing-related illnesses to be treated in a facility that is more suitable to their needs, in a modern and state-of-the-art environment.

This is also a significant milestone and the first step in our aim of creating a cardio respiratory village at the hospital, which will encompass a new cardiac catheterisation laboratory, where cardiac procedures are carried out, and better location of services.

This is a significant piece of work involving our clinical, estates and facilities teams working closely with external contractors to make sure the ward is ready to open in record time.

- Pictured: Simon Goodwin, Capital Projects Programme Manager, with Ellis Tuck-Brown, from contractor Marcon.



Animal therapy boosts patient recovery and experience

The Trust's Sheppey Frailty Unit has welcomed a visit from a miniature pony as part of an ongoing drive to use animal therapy to boost patient recovery and experience.

By William Chambers

Therapy pony George, a four-year-old Miniature Shetland, represents Faversham-based organisation 'George And Friends Animal Therapies', run by former NHS worker Michelle Burney.

She said: "George loves the care and attention he gets while spending time in hospital and he really enjoys being stroked and talked to by everyone."

"For most patients it is something new and different - therapy animals like George can really help to improve people's wellbeing and mental health. It was lovely to see the sheer joy on their faces when we walked in!"

Linda Shardow (pictured below) was one of several patients who met George up close during his trip to the hospital. She said: "I think he is beautiful and absolutely perfect. I

was quite shocked to see him at first but he was so gentle and it was really nice to stroke him - it makes a real change to your day."

George's visit – made possible by The Medway Hospital Charity – comes after the Trust recently introduced regular sessions at the unit with therapy dogs Molly and Hunney.

Kelly Strudwick, Nursing Associate, said: "It was very exciting to welcome George – the patients were delighted to see him and the staff were too! Spending time with George has helped to boost morale and spread cheer, showing the benefits of animal therapy."

"We are really proud of the innovative service that we provide at Sheppey, and it's important that we help our patients have the best possible experience while they are with us, ensuring we look after both their physical and mental wellbeing."



• Therapy pony George with Zoe Goodman, the Trust's Voluntary Services Manager

"Spending time with George has helped to boost morale and spread cheer, showing the benefits of animal therapy."



• Some of our wonderful volunteers and therapy dogs who regularly visit the Sheppey Frailty Unit.





Makeover creates calming environment on Critical Care Unit

A welcoming entrance for patients and a calming environment for relatives and staff has been created on our Critical Care Unit thanks to a makeover.

Wall graphics featuring birds and willow leaves now line the walls of the freshly painted corridors of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and the High Dependency Unit (HDU) to help make the space feel more welcoming. The two relatives' rooms on ICU have also been painted in a soothing pale blue and blossom wall art installed. In addition, the shower room for those who choose to stay on the unit overnight is also back in use thanks to repairs being carried out and it being freshened up.

The blossom wall art theme continues in the waiting rooms on both ICU and HDU which have also been repainted. Each of the rooms have new chairs and all of the patient and relative information has been updated and placed in leaflet holders.

To make it easier for visitors and patients, as well as new staff, to find their way around the unit, new signage has been put up and to keep the area clutter free posters have been placed in new display cabinets.



A large poster showing the critical care journey with information for patients and relatives has also been framed.

The Trust's Organ and Tissue Donation Committee funded the project which was led by staff on the unit.

Anita Bowman, Senior Audit Sister for Critical Care, who was involved with the project, said: "The Critical Care Unit is now a space we are all proud of.

"The drab relatives' rooms have been completely transformed into a comfortable and relaxing area for them to stay overnight and it's fantastic that the shower room is back in use again as it means relatives can stay on the unit where their loved one is for as long as they want without having to worry about traveling to and from home to freshen up.

"As a result of the work the unit has a completely different look and feel and we have created a much-improved environment for patients, visitors and staff to feel as comfortable as possible. A huge thank you to everyone who was involved in the transformation."

Double digit celebration for hospital's nursery

Our on-site nursery Tiny Tugs recently marked its 20th birthday with a celebratory tea.

The nursery, for children of staff working for the Trust, was built during 2003, when Nursery Manager Amanda Richards joined to oversee the build.

She said: "When I speak to colleagues whose children came here many years ago and their child is now grown up at college, university or forging a successful career, they still fondly remember their time at nursery."

Tim Cowell's son Oliver was one of the first children to attend the nursery. Now 22 he is working in the Royal Navy as a leading engineering technician for weapons and communication systems.

Oliver said: "I loved my time at Tiny Tugs. I remember Amanda and her fantastic team. I will never forget how kind they were to me."

Tim, one of the Trust's Senior Facilities Managers, said: "Being a single parent while trying to hold down a full-time job was an extremely challenging time. The Trust introducing Tiny Tugs helped greatly as it took the pressure off allowing me to do my job in the

knowledge Oliver was in safe hands and under the great care of the nursery staff."

Amanda added: "The nursery prides itself on being a warm, welcoming, family friendly environment and myself and the team look forward to welcoming many more staff and their little ones through our doors."



Nursery Manager Amanda with some of the children from Tiny Tugs



- Find out more about working for us. www.medway.nhs.uk/work-with-us

Meet our Chaplaincy Team

By Amanda Crawford

Our Chaplaincy Team supports patients, hospital staff as well as those visiting their loved ones. The team includes two paid chaplains, 10 chaplaincy volunteers and volunteer chaplains. There is also support from the local Catholic parish.

The volunteers carry out daily ward rounds to raise awareness of the spiritual care patients and families can receive, assessing if they need to be put on the chaplains active list.

Lead Chaplain the Reverend Ruth Bierbaum (pictured above), who has been with the hospital for nearly three years, said: "We believe that faith and belief can make a very positive difference in difficult times.

"As chaplains we get a sense of the life of the hospital and our impact is quite big. We talk to many teams including bereavement, equality and inclusion and estates among others, as well as volunteers and the Executive Team.

"In addition to supporting patients and their families, we support colleagues and help inform international nurses who come to work for the hospital, on when to offer spiritual guidance."

As part of their role, the chaplains train the chaplaincy volunteers who join the Trust and Chaplain Clare van den Berg has recently inducted a new volunteer who will be based at Sheppey Frailty Unit to help provide spiritual support.

The hospital has a chapel located on Level 2, Blue Zone, which is a shared space for people of all faith and belief backgrounds and for staff, patients and visitors. The doors are always open.

Find out more about how the Chaplaincy Team can help patients, families and colleagues on our website: www.medway.nhs.uk

- Pictured left: Reverend Anthony Ayodele-Fadip in the hospital chapel standing by our Memory Tree.



Making blood samples easier and quicker for emergency care patients



We have significantly reduced the number of blood transfusion samples that were being rejected, thanks to a dedicated 'Patient First' improvement project.

Between January and June 2023, an average of 46 samples from patients in the Emergency Department (ED) were rejected each month, which was importantly a risk to patient safety, but also inefficient.

In October 2023, the Trust focused on reducing this number, looking at the reasons why samples were being rejected and what action was needed to address these.

This proactive focus resulted in 58 per cent fewer samples being rejected each month by late 2023.

The project was led by a dedicated team from Emergency Medicine and Kathleen Sharp, the Trust's Transfusion Practitioner.

Consultant Nurse Cliff Evans said: "The winter of 2023 was exceptionally busy within the Emergency Department due to the hospital being full and patients waiting admission having to remain within the Emergency Department for prolonged periods. Unfortunately, the risk of human error and patients experiencing avoidable harm were significant in these conditions. On analysis it was identified that there were a number of reasons why blood samples were being rejected. For patients, it meant repeated attempts to take blood, which we understand is frustrating and inconvenient for them. It was also inefficient for us and meant delays to patient care.

"We knew we had to do something to turn this around, so we followed the methodology and tools from our improvement system, Patient First, to help us make improvements."

The issue was highlighted as a Trust-wide patient safety concern and clear, realistic objectives and actions were agreed to address it.

As a result, not only has the number of rejected samples dropped significantly, a pilot phlebotomy service has begun to assist with taking blood from patients experiencing extended stays within ED.

Transfusion Practitioner Kathleen Sharp said: "There has been a significant improvement, which we need to build on and continue to work towards the improvement targets we have set. The phlebotomy service presence has made a huge difference, and we are looking to keep this. We are also sharing our learning with the patient safety improvement team to help with other improvement projects across the hospital as this is a shared issue throughout the organisation."



Couple's heart-warming book donation to help grieving families

A bereaved couple kindly donated 24 heart-warming books to the hospital to help other families either prepare to say goodbye to their baby or following the loss of a child.

Francesca Newman and her partner Adam McCabe gifted the 'Guess How Much I Love You' books in memory of their son Arthur who sadly passed away after he was born at 33 weeks on 20 January 2022.

The books were funded thanks to donations from friends and family through a JustGiving page, which was set up by the couple following Arthur's death.

Francesca said: "My parents used to read it to me when I was little and we bought it for Arthur before he was

born. After he was born we read the book to him so it holds really special memories for us.

"We know how difficult and heart-breaking it is losing a child. Our hope is that other families who may find themselves in the same situation as us, will find comfort in reading this lovely, special story to their little one either as they prepare to say goodbye to them or following the loss of their baby."

Eleven months after Arthur's death the couple welcomed their second son George who was born at the hospital on 29 December 2022.

Francesca added: "Finding out I was pregnant with baby number two so quickly after losing Arthur was a real worry. But ever since my six-week scan, and even up to now, the care and support the hospital staff have given all three of us has been amazing.



"Although the books are in memory of Arthur, they are also our way of giving something back to the hospital and thanking staff for all that they did to help ease my fears and help George arrive safely. Having George has brought me back to life, I now smile and laugh again and that's down to everyone who was involved with my care at Medway Maritime Hospital."



• Francesca with partner Adam, baby George and Bereavement Support Midwife Danielle Burnett



• Kristal Sitchon, Clinical Sister, and Bea Encierto, Staff Nurse, with a new Neopuff resuscitator on the neonatal unit

Medway League of Friends funding benefits patients

Young patients on our neonatal unit are benefiting from new life-saving equipment thanks to £25,751 worth of funding from the Medway League of Friends.

Vital funds raised by generous donations and profits from the charity's hospital shop and café have allowed the unit, which cares for sick and premature babies, to purchase 25 new infant resuscitators.

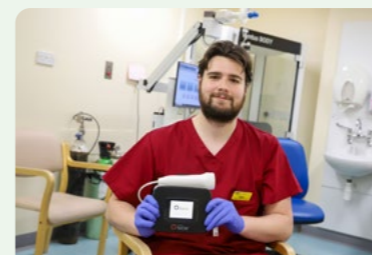
Julie Douglas, Unit Manager and Senior Sister, said: "We are very grateful to the League of Friends for their help in

funding the new Neopuff resuscitators for our intensive care unit and special care nursery.

"This new equipment helps to increase assurance of the safety of the babies and ensure that our cot-side resuscitation system is compatible with the equipment used in the delivery suite."

In total the League of Friends donated £104,447 to the hospital in 2023.

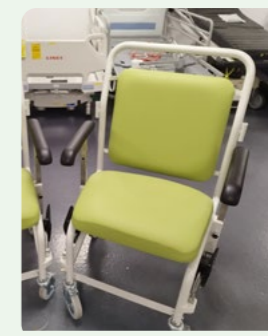
This generous donation includes:



£12,026 to buy new equipment for the hospital's cardio respiratory department and equipment library, including four new Fractional Exhaled Nitric Oxide (FeNo) devices, which are used to diagnose asthma by measuring your breath.



£21,095 for a laparoscopic surgery machine for the hospital's Theatres which reduces surgical time with a better outcome including reduced anaesthesia time and quicker patient recovery.



£1,465 for two dedicated wheelchairs for the hospital's Discharge Lounge to help delays in discharging and free up beds ready for the next patient.



£28,028 for three new bladder scanners for the hospital's urogynaecology clinic and Equipment Library.

...and, £16,082 for a new cooling unit for critically unwell patients in the hospital's Intensive Care Unit, which helps to restore normal brain function.





Child-Friendly Medway's book donation for young patients

Young bookworms can now curl up in two new book nooks and read their favourite stories during their stay at Medway Maritime Hospital thanks to a donation of 80 books. Child Friendly Medway donated the books and installed the book nooks in the Magpies Centre and the children's day surgery ward on Sunderland Day Case Unit.

Amy St Louis, Child-Friendly Medway Lead, came up with the idea after she saw an appeal by the hospital's Play Specialist Ann McKinnon for new books and toys.

She said: "It became clear our book nooks would be the perfect addition to provide entertainment for children

and young people visiting the hospital, giving them the opportunity to read with their parent or carer while waiting for or recovering from treatment."

The book nooks are part of Child-Friendly Medway's 'For the Love of Reading' initiative, which aims to inspire children and young people to develop a passion for books and reading.

Ann, said: "Reading can improve children's cognitive development, language skills, concentration, imagination, and creativity. So, this generous donation has received a warm welcome from staff working on our wards, who have said our young

patients will hugely benefit from this new addition."

Donna Law, Manager of The Medway Hospital Charity, said: "We would like to thank the Child-Friendly Medway Team for thinking of our young patients here at the hospital.

"We know being in hospital can be a worrying time for children, so being able to pick up a book and be transported into a story will be a huge help during this time and ease any concerns for both patients and parents.

"We are very grateful for all the donations we receive which go towards benefitting patients and staff."

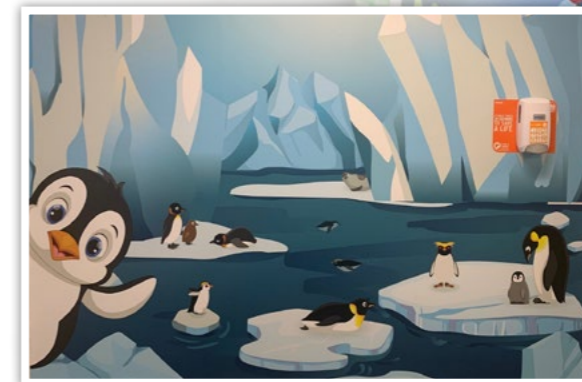
Donations fund colourful murals

The Medway Hospital Charity was delighted to fund colourful murals in our Children's Ward and Magpies outpatient unit, following feedback from the Trust's Friends and Family Test.

You asked for these areas to be brightened up to improve our young patients' experience and that's exactly what we did! Suzy Dolby, Matron for Children's Services, said: "First impressions count and the Children's Ward was previously lacking in colour, with white walls.

"The murals are colourful, inviting and really enhance the space. Colour psychology plays an important part of feeling safe and welcome. Blues and greens are reassuring and calming colours, so the designs have been chosen purposefully to support wellbeing.

"On behalf of the team, I would like to thank everyone who has made a donation to The Medway Hospital Charity's Children's Ward fund. Your support enables us to buy items that fall outside of the NHS budget and make a real difference to our young patients."



Good luck Tracey!



We'd like to say a massive thank you to Nursery Practitioner Tracey Daniel who will be running The London Marathon on Sunday 21 April to raise money for The Medway Hospital Charity.

Tracey, who works for the Trust's Tiny Tugs Day Nursery, won a ballot place in the 26.2 mile race.

Ballot runners do not have to raise money for the event, however Tracey wants to support the hospital she works at and thank them for the fantastic care provided to her family.

Tap to Support Tracey's fundraising Tracey's London Marathon - JustGiving



Tracey said: "I'm raising money for Medway Maritime Hospital because they help everyone who needs them. They have supported my dad during cancer treatment and my mum during her two strokes. Showing appreciation for the help that my parents and others have received is something I want to do and raising money for our hospital charity allows me to do this."

Get involved

If you would like to find out more about fundraising for our hospital, please contact The Medway Hospital Charity Team:

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

Making a positive impact

Our Governors have been actively engaging with the community through a series of visits in the hospital and across Medway and Swale. These efforts were aimed at raising awareness about the Governor elections held in March and highlighting the importance of community involvement in shaping healthcare services.

During these visits, our Governors provided valuable insights into the roles and responsibilities involved in being a Governor and offered information about the election process.

Cllr David Brake highlighted the importance of connecting with the local community, emphasising, "It's invaluable for our current Governors

to share our role and the positive impact it can have on Medway Maritime Hospital."

An information session was held at the hospital during the nomination period, which was well-attended. Prospective candidates had the opportunity to learn more about the election process and ask questions about becoming a Governor.

Now that the nominations are closed, the next stage involves members voting for their preferred candidates. The Notice of Poll will be published on Monday 8 April, and voting will close on Monday 29 April. Eligible members will receive their voting link by email or by post for those without an email address.

For those who aren't yet members, you can find more information and **sign up on our website**. By becoming a member, you'll have the opportunity to participate in future elections and stay informed about Trust activities.

The Trust in the community

Dates for your diary

Keep your eyes peeled for further details on:

Clinical Strategy Launch (including tours) - Friday 10 May
Summer Fun Day - Friday 2 August



Ray brings patient perspective to frailty service development

Patient representative Ray Holding is helping the Trust introduce an improved service for frailty patients through a new Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) unit.

Local resident Ray has been providing valuable insight to the project team, attending meetings, joining discussions and questioning clinical and management teams to ensure the patient is at the heart of the new service.

He recently visited Frailty SDEC with Dr Sanjay Suman, Consultant Geriatrician and Clinical Director for Geriatrics, Rheumatology and Neurology, and Matron Emma Carroll, to further understand the proposed patient journey. The new unit is being set up within Emerald Ward to improve treatment and outcomes for frail patients.

Ray said: "The tour was both informative and interesting. All members of the Frailty Team that I met displayed enthusiasm for the unit as a whole and the forthcoming SDEC. I was impressed by the confidence of the clinicians, therapists and nursing staff.

"The use of the SDEC for frail, elderly patients will enable them to be assessed by a multi-disciplinary team, treated and discharged to their home environment, if safe, on the same day, with processes in place for follow-up in the community. This is welcomed.

"With an increasingly ageing population and the associated rise in Alzheimer's and Dementia, specialist wards like Emerald and the forthcoming specialist SDEC will be

needed increasingly for the safe and speedy care and treatment of frail patients in the future."

Ray has been a member of the Trust for around 10 years and has attended public and patient engagement events during that time, including the Trust's public event on Frailty in November 2023. Following this meeting, the opportunity arose for a patient representative to be part of the project team building the Frailty SDEC service.

Dr Suman said: "We felt it was very important to have patient input, to make sure that what we are creating is designed with the patient experience in mind. To help us find someone, the Trust's Engagement Team contacted all those who had attended our public event, as they had already shown an interest in frailty, and Ray put himself forward. He is making a fantastic contribution. We really welcome his insight and views and would like to thank him for his ongoing time and support."







Ray will be invited back to Frailty SDEC as the project progresses.

If you would like to be a member of the Trust and be alerted to similar opportunities to get involved in improving services, please visit our website, contact our Membership Office at met-tr.members-medway@nhs.net or call 01634 825292.

• Pictured above: Dr Sanjay Suman, Consultant Geriatrician and Clinical Director for Geriatrics, Rheumatology and Neurology, and Matron Emma Carroll with Ray on Frailty SDEC

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