

news at Medway

Spring 2025

NHS

Medway

NHS Foundation Trust

“It’s a life-saver”

**Jools Holland OBE
celebrates robotic
surgery at Medway**

INSIDE

Surgery team’s a
cut above the rest

Caring staff at
the heart of new
health centre



Making it easier to access our services

I hope you enjoy reading our latest edition of News at Medway, which is my last before I take up my new NHS role in Sussex.

Jonathan Wade joins Medway as Interim Chief Executive in April, alongside his role as Chief Executive of Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust.

He's an experienced and respected Chief Executive who understands the challenges the local NHS face, such as the need to reduce waiting times.

In this issue I'm delighted to share some of the ways that we're speeding up access to treatment.

Our surgical teams are using the nationally-recognised high intensity theatre lists – known as HIT lists – to reduce delays for routine surgery caused by the pandemic. On pages 4 and 5 you can read how this safe

and efficient approach enables us to treat large numbers of patients in a single day.

We've made it easier to access our services away from Medway Maritime Hospital. Our Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC) at Sheppey Community Hospital offers vital tests and scans closer to home for people living in Swale. You can read more about this, and the services available at Rochester's CDC, on pages 8 and 9.

We've also invested in new technology, such as the latest surgical robot 'Hugo', so that we extend the benefits of this minimally-invasive surgery to more patients – see page 12 and 13.

We are also treating more patients sooner in our Emergency Department (ED) – each month more than three in every four patients are seen, treated or discharged within four hours and ambulances are being turned around in record time. We need to do here, particularly to reduce the time it takes to be admitted to a ward, which is one of our Patient First improvement priorities.



Another is making a determined effort to listen to, and act on, your feedback. Telling us about your experience – both what went well and what we can do better – helps us to improve. If you get a text after an appointment or hospital stay asking you to complete the NHS Friends and Family Test, please give us your honest feedback.

Thank you for supporting your local hospital. I am very proud to have played a small part in Medway's improvement journey over the last four years.

This hospital will always have a special place in my heart.

Jayne

Jayne Black, Chief Executive

Email: medwayft.chiefexecutive@nhs.net

Introducing new Interim Chief Executive, Jonathan Wade.

Find out more about Jonathan on our website
www.medway.nhs.uk



The News at Medway Team

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

Email: communications.medwayft@nhs.net

Website: www.medway.nhs.uk

Editor-in-Chief: Glynis Alexander

Editor: Amanda Crawford

Photography: Mike Gough

Design: Nina Lee

How playful knights bring calmer days

Young patients are being offered innovative distraction and relaxation techniques as a way of easing anxiety linked to surgery.



Teenager Calum Griffin, from Medway, was one of the first patients to trial this treatment after hospital staff supported him to play chess during a minor foot operation, while awake and under local anaesthetic.

Theatre staff also helped 15-year-old Calum focus on deep breathing and other relaxation techniques, such as guided imagery, which involved imagining that he was playing video games and eating his favourite foods.

Clinicians take on national leadership roles

Two Medway clinicians have been appointed to national roles in NHS England's Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) improvement programme.

Jeremy Davis, Deputy Chief Medical Officer and ear, nose and throat (ENT) surgeon (pictured top), has been appointed as a national GIRFT clinical lead for ENT, which he will carry out alongside his role at Medway NHS Foundation Trust.

Elsewhere, Cliff Evans, Emergency Care Nurse Consultant (bottom right), was asked to join GIRFT's Urgent and Emergency Care Programme as an Expert Nursing Advisor, alongside his current role.

The GIRFT programme aims to improve the treatment and care of patients through in-depth review of services, benchmarking, and presenting a data-driven evidence base to support change. Clinical leads across more than 40 workstreams undertake reviews of their specialty, examining how things are currently being done and how they could be improved.



Did you know...?

The hospital's deli and coffee counter Below Deck Galley (Level 1, Purple Zone) is open for visitors and people attending appointments from 3pm to 7pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 7pm on Saturday and Sunday. Outside of these times it is open to Trust staff and members of the emergency services only. There is a range of hot and cold drinks, snacks, cakes, sandwiches and salads available. Payment is by card only.



Carbon neutral status for League of Friends

Medway League of Friends, which runs the First Rate Café and Shop at the hospital, has been awarded carbon neutral status for the third year running.

Operations Manager, Scott Belcher said: "During 2023, we produced 23.82 tonnes of CO2, a 30 per cent reduction on the previous 12 months. This was offset by supporting a range of woodland management, forest creation and planting projects in the UK."



Read the full story on our website:
www.medway.nhs.uk

Cancer patient's steps to thank NHS

Police officer Gary Allen raised £5,000 for Macmillan Cancer Support after walking 1.5 miles a day for two weeks, despite being diagnosed with terminal cancer.

He said: "I have been treated so well by the staff on Galton Day Unit where I undergo five to seven-hour long chemotherapy sessions every other week, as well as the NHS as a whole and Macmillan. It's because of this that I really wanted to give something back."



Surgery team's a cut above the rest

By Will Chambers

The COVID-19 pandemic has left unprecedented surgical backlogs across the NHS, but at Medway Maritime Hospital, innovative solutions are helping turn the tide.

Following nationally-recognised initiatives, such as High Intensity Theatre (HIT) lists and High Volume Low Complexity (HVLC) lists, we are using the latest technology to transform the way routine surgeries are delivered, ensuring patients receive timely, high-quality care.

In January 2025 our Surgery and Orthopaedics teams achieved a remarkable milestone by carrying out a record-breaking list for upper limb surgeries. This included procedures such as carpal tunnel releases, which are high in demand but relatively low in complexity. By grouping these cases together and optimising theatre time, the team was able to treat up to 20 patients in just one day.

This builds on the department's innovative work from the previous year, when they successfully operated on 15 patients in a single day, using virtual reality headsets to help patients relax during procedures performed under local anaesthesia. This groundbreaking approach not only improved patient experience but also demonstrated the potential for technology to enhance surgical care.

Ali Abdelwahab, Locum Consultant Orthopedic Surgeon, who oversaw the January 2025 list, said: "This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team. By focusing on efficiency and patient-centred care, we're making a real difference in reducing waiting times."

"Patients are carefully chosen based on clinical need and the simplicity of their procedure, while theatre schedules are optimised to minimise downtime, with teams working together closely to ensure smooth transitions between cases. Most HVLC procedures are day cases, allowing patients to return home the same day and freeing up beds for others."



• **Teamwork:** Some of our amazing theatre team

- **Up for the challenge:** Ali Abdelwahab, Locum Consultant Orthopedic Surgeon takes on a HIT list

Howard Cottam, Medical Director of Surgery and Anaesthetics, said: "This is another fantastic example of the excellent team working across surgical services, theatres and anaesthesia, which is helping to treat more patients sooner."

"Certainly the key to success is meticulous planning and collaboration. Every member of the team plays a vital role in ensuring these lists run smoothly."

Feedback from patients has been overwhelmingly positive, with many saying it has helped them regain their quality of life quickly.

Patient Bukola Ogunleye, 48, who underwent carpal tunnel surgery earlier this year, said: "I'd been struggling with severe pain and numbness in my hand which affected my daily life. When I got the call for surgery, I was relieved. The team was fantastic, and I'm feeling so much better."

"The virtual reality headset was a game-changer. I was able to immerse myself in a calming environment, and before I knew it, the procedure was over. It made the whole experience much less stressful and distracted me from the operation."

“By focusing on efficiency and patient-centred care, we're making a real difference in reducing waiting times.”

Generous donation left in memory of patient

A patient's legacy will continue to touch the lives of patients, staff and volunteers after a generous donation of £4,000 was left in her memory to The Medway Hospital Charity.

Lisa Scott sadly died last year aged 42, following a diagnosis of breast cancer. She was a vibrant, kind-hearted person with a learning disability, who often found the hospital environment overwhelming but overcame challenges with a smile.

With the support of the hospital's Learning Disability Team and calming presence of therapy dogs, Lisa found the strength to navigate her journey with resilience and moments of joy.

Learning Disability Nurses first met Lisa at her Breast Clinic appointment following a GP referral. It was quickly established that Lisa had a love of the dogs – including Lily, Fred and Jarvis – who supported her to theatre and appointments on many occasions.

In the last few days of Lisa's life, she was brought to hospital and admitted to Lawrence Ward, where she died peacefully surrounded by loved ones. Lisa received several visits from the dogs during this time, which provided comfort to everyone.

A message shared by Lisa's family said: "Lisa's diagnosis was especially sad to receive at such a young age and nothing prepared us. Because of Lisa's learning disability, it meant she had little understanding of her journey ahead and later prognosis. In

some strange way we felt this was a blessing, as it meant we could take on that worry for her.

"Lisa showed bravery and courage throughout her journey, which was hugely helped by the therapy dogs and staff who took care of her, from the Learning Disability Team to the anaesthetists. The support Lisa received was very much personalised to her needs and became invaluable to her wellbeing and coping mechanism.

"It was a pleasure to see how much of an impact the therapy dogs made on us all, and of course in particular Lisa who was always full of smiles to see them.

"We cannot thank everyone enough for making such a sad and difficult journey a lot less difficult."



• **Remembering Lisa:** Nursing staff from the Hospital's Learning Disability and Cancer Teams, with Therapy Dogs and their owners, plus Lorna Young, cousin of Lisa Scott.



Birthday cuddle gives premature babies the best chance

By Hayley Pierre

Premature babies are being given the best chance of survival and to bond with their family thanks to a new initiative on our neonatal unit.

The first time parents of premature or small babies get to touch or hold their child is usually once they are in an incubator on the unit. But the Birthday Cuddle means babies who are well enough can now be held by their mum or birthing partner before they are moved to the unit.

Zainab Yunus and her partner Olabode Sheu (pictured above) were the first family to benefit from the initiative when their son Akorede Aman Sheu was born at 24 weeks weighing just 770g.

...families begin their journey as partners in caring for their infant right from the start.

She said: "Watching them together gave me a small but powerful reassurance that our baby was safe and that he was here, fighting. It's a memory I'll cherish forever."

Research shows that skin-to-skin care improves the chances of survival for preterm or low-weight babies when started immediately after birth instead of once the baby is on the neonatal unit. It also helps parents to bond with their baby, reduces stress and anxiety, and helps parents feel more confident about looking after their premature baby.

To date more than 60 newborns delivered before 32 weeks have benefited from the Birthday Cuddle.

Dr Helen Gbinigie, Consultant Neonatologist, said: "Before implementing the Birthday Cuddle some families had to wait weeks to cuddle their babies for the first time due to their prematurity. Unfortunately, for some of the unit's sickest babies, the first cuddle occurred during their baby's last moments.

"Introducing cuddling in the Delivery Room ensures families begin their journey as partners in caring for their infant right from the start."



CARING STAFF

at heart of vital new health centre

By Will Chambers

A new Community Diagnostic Centre has opened at Sheppey Community Hospital in Minster providing patients on the Isle of Sheppey, Sittingbourne and surrounding areas with a range of vital tests and scans closer to home.

In Medway and Swale, patients have access to two such centres, with the first – located at Rochester Healthy Living Centre on Delce Road – having opened in August 2023.

Staff at both sites come from Medway NHS Foundation Trust, such as Radiographer Jay Lafond who is based between the new Sheppey centre and Medway Maritime Hospital in Gillingham. Jay said: “This is fantastic service for our patients in Sheppey, Sittingbourne and the surrounding areas. It’s great that we are able to care for people closer to home, in brand new state-of-the-art facilities.

“It’s important that patients come forward for scans as soon as they are invited, as this can confirm or rule out a suspected diagnosis, or occasionally identify a condition that was not even suspected.”

The centres are playing a crucial role in speeding up the diagnosis of conditions such as cancer and cardiovascular disease for patients in Medway and Swale, with thousands of tests delivered across both sites.

The first phase of the multi-million pound Sheppey project launched with Computerised Tomography (CT) scanning, with the second phase to include Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scanning from this spring.

- **Pictured right:** Radiographer Jay Lafond works at the new unit in Sheppey and at Medway Maritime Hospital.



- **Patient first:** Radiographer Sohail prepares Paul’s CT scan



“The calming atmosphere is noticeable – the murals on the wall, and the quietness, help you feel less anxious...”

Sixty-two-year-old patient Paul O’Connor (pictured above), from Minster, was among the first patients to have a CT scan at the new unit in Sheppey. Paul explained the ease of attending the appointment so close to his home in Minster, which avoided the need to travel to a main hospital building in Medway or further afield.

Paul said: “It was really easy to get here as I live just around the corner in Minster. I was even able to come for my CT scan on a short break while working from home, and I got a parking space straight away.

“It’s very different to coming into a busy, bigger hospital environment. The calming atmosphere is noticeable – the murals on the wall, and the quietness, help you feel less anxious about the clinical setting. The radiographers Jay and Sohail were very friendly and caring – overall it was a positive experience and I felt at ease.”

Making a difference

Epilepsy Nurse Specialist Teresa McIntyre provides bespoke and holistic care to children living with epilepsy. We spoke to one family about how she has helped them navigate their child's complex healthcare journey.

Five-year-old Maisie Reid, mum Holly and dad Simon first met Teresa two years ago while waiting for the results of genetic tests to explain Maisie's deteriorating health. She had experienced seizures and wasn't walking, talking or able to hold anything.

Soon after their initial meeting, Maisie was diagnosed with Rett Syndrome, a rare genetic neurological and developmental disorder that affects the way the brain develops and causes a progressive loss of motor skills and language.

Holly said: "It was a scary place not knowing what they were going to find or what they were looking for and sitting in meeting after meeting waiting for answers.

"But when we met our Roald Dahl Nurse Teresa it felt like we had a friend in our corner. She was advocating for Maisie, asking questions I wanted to ask, or picking up on something I'd said or asked and making sure it was given attention. She has been with us every single step of the way since."

Teresa, whose post was created thanks to Roald Dahl's Marvellous Children's Charity said: "Since Maisie's diagnosis, we have worked together and importantly, learned together what Maisie's needs are and about how best we can help her. I am often the first port of call for the family if there are queries relating to clinical issues in non-urgent situations. That can reduce the number of trips to A&E, too.

"I offer advice on medication changes, liaise with other professionals when needed, help support the family to gain necessary equipment, and link in with Maisie's school to provide up-to-date information. Basically, I try to be there whenever Maisie's family need me. And being part of the charity means I have access to a variety of resources and support groups I can pass on to families.

Holly added: "Teresa is so hard working, so caring, and so genuine. Before we met her, we felt lost and overwhelmed, but thanks to her we don't anymore. She really does make a difference to our lives on a daily basis."

● **Royal support:** Maisie with mum Holly at the Roald Dahl's Marvellous Children's Charity event last Christmas, hosted by charity patron, Her Majesty The Queen.
Photo courtesy of Ian Jones



Charity donates new cooling cot to help bereaved parents

Charity Abigail's Footsteps has donated a new version of the Abi Cooling Cot to the Trust's maternity bereavement team.

Following the loss of a child, the special cot keeps the baby at a cool temperature, allowing parents to be able to spend precious time with their baby and provide them with the chance to grieve and say goodbye in their own time after they have died.

Charity Ambassador Cheryl Baker and co-founders David and Jo Ward presented the cot which now features a softer outer colour and insert, giving the cot a more sympathetic appearance for families. It also features an integrated digital



● **Pictured:** David and Jo Ward present the cooling cot to our maternity unit, with Charity Ambassador Cheryl Baker

temperature display, making it both effective and user-friendly for our maternity bereavement team. The plaque design has also been changed so parents who have donated an Abi

Cooling Cot can keep a piece of it in the shape of a heart, in a keepsake box.

It is available for bereaved families to use in our two dedicated bereavement suites, Bluebell and Abigail's Place, both of which provide parents with a safe and comfortable space to spend time with their baby and receive visits from family and friends.

Ali Herron, Director of Midwifery, said, "These cots offer grieving parents the opportunity to spend additional precious time with their baby before they have to say goodbye, something which would not have been possible without them.

"We are extremely grateful to Abigail's Footsteps for ensuring we have this vital piece of equipment in our maternity bereavement suites."

Charity founder's work recognised

Congratulations to David Ward who was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours list for his services to bereaved parents in Kent.

He and his wife Jo founded Abigail's Footsteps in 2010, in memory of their daughter Abigail Rose Ward who was stillborn at 41 weeks in 2009.

Abigail's



Green target on track thanks to funding



Thanks to more than £26 million in funding, the hospital is investing in a greener future.

This includes installing solar panels, replacing aging boilers with modern heat pumps, installing energy efficient LED lights and double glazing which is expected to result in some 3,500 tonnes of annual carbon savings.

Our Heat Decarbonisation Plan is working to a net zero framework to guide our transition from fossil fuel reliant heating systems to low carbon alternatives.

Works to install the new solar panelling will begin in the spring and replacing the heat pumps and new windows later in the summer.

And our plant rooms, walkways and Theatre areas will benefit from new energy efficient LED lighting.

Find out more on our website www.medway.nhs.uk

Surgical robot strikes a chord with music legend

By Hayley Pierre

Musician and TV presenter Jools Holland was guest of honour at a special event to celebrate the first anniversary of us adopting our second robotic assisted surgical device called Hugo.

Attending in his role as Deputy Lieutenant of Kent, Jools heard how, for the first time, patients needing a hysterectomy are benefiting from the minimally invasive surgery (MIS) tool, as well as those who need procedures to treat kidney and prostate cancer.

Jools was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2014. While he has gone on to make a full recovery, he explained during his speech how he has been working with one charity to help raise awareness of the signs and symptoms.

He said: "I worked with Prostate Cancer UK on a campaign to help people get diagnosed early as, unfortunately, by the time some are diagnosed it's too late to do anything. It's all very well diagnosing people but if there isn't something there to help them it can make it very difficult for them to get the treatment they need. But one of the things that has made me very optimistic is Hugo, as this new technology means you can treat more people more efficiently which is fantastic.

"Technology is absolutely wonderful and it's speeding everything up and the future is looking great. Hugo really is great news. It's a life-saver."

Three patients also spoke on the day about their experiences of RAS using Hugo.

Ken Mellows was the first patient to undergo a colorectal procedure after he was diagnosed with colon cancer.

The 79-year-old said: "After my surgery I was on the High Dependency Unit for the first night, then on a ward for a couple of days before being allowed home.

"Ten-months on and everything is still going well and that is all thanks to my surgeon, the theatre team and of course Hugo."

Aspiring medics and Year 13 students Hikmah Jolaoso from Sir Joseph Williamson Mathematical School, and Kiran Karumathy, from Rainham Mark Grammar School, and Year 12 student Lottie Hobbs, from Sevenoaks School, helped Jools cut a ribbon to mark the official opening of Hugo.

At the end of the event they also visited the operating theatre to try the console our highly-skilled surgeons use to operate Hugo and perform complex and incredibly precise procedures.

Professor Matin Sheriff, Consultant Urological Surgeon and Lead Robotic Surgeon said: "Thanks to robotic surgery, lives really have been improved and saved."

The benefits of RAS include:

- less pain
- going home sooner
- less chance of needing follow-up surgery or experiencing a complication, such as a postoperative infection
- reduced mortality rates
- less need for blood transfusions compared to open or laparoscopic surgery through small incisions.





Concerned manager saves colleague's life

Intuition played a part in helping one of our managers save the life of a co-worker after he fell seriously ill with meningitis while at home alone.

Waste Operative Eddie Butler called his manager James Heather and asked him for a lift to work the next day as his car window was damaged. But when James went to pick Eddie up, there was no response.

James, a Supervisor for Transport and Waste, said: "Something just didn't feel right.

"I messaged him a few more times at work, but I didn't get a reply, so I drove to his house to do a welfare check but again there was no answer. I remembered he'd said once that his partner Elaine worked at a bakery in Rainham, so I drove there to let her know that I was worried about him."

Shortly afterwards James received a call from Elaine saying she'd found Eddie in bed and unresponsive. He was taken by ambulance to Medway Maritime Hospital where tests revealed he had meningitis.

Thankfully Eddie has gone on to make a full recovery and is now back at work.

Eddie said: "James is a very caring person and manager. If it wasn't for him going to find Elaine and her coming home, I wouldn't have been found until gone 3pm. I'm extremely grateful to James for going above and beyond."

James added: "I know my staff inside and out and I just knew something was wrong. It's my job to make sure my staff are as safe as possible so I'm glad I trusted my instincts and I went to check on Eddie."

- **Life-saver:** Eddie (pictured, right) thanks manager James

Cardiac arrest survivor forever grateful

A patient has donated £5,000 to our charity in recognition of the excellent care he received at Medway Maritime Hospital.

Chris Mills (77), a retired airline pilot, was found on the ground, unresponsive and without a pulse, near Dockside outlet shopping centre by off-duty nurse, Rachael Lewis.

She administered cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), while waiting for the ambulance to arrive, saving his life.

Upon arrival at Medway Maritime Hospital, Chris was assessed and admitted to the Intensive Care Unit.

He said: "I didn't realise that there was anything wrong with me. I'd never had heart problems before. One moment I was walking with my wife Brenda and the next I felt things fade away. When I woke up I thought I was in Canada as my daughter, Mikaela, was there."

Brenda said: "As Canada is five hours behind, Mikaela was able to jump on a plane and rush to the hospital. We were so thankful she was there when Chris woke up."

Once stabilised, Chris was moved to the Coronary Care Unit and then to Bronte Ward. During his three-and-a-half week stay in Medway, he underwent a variety of diagnostic scans and tests, which revealed he needed a triple heart bypass.

Chris was then transferred to St Thomas' Hospital in London where he underwent major heart surgery before returning home to St Mary's Island. Thankfully he has made a speedy recovery and just months later, Chris is walking five kilometres a day and, in March, went skiing in Whistler, Canada, with Brenda, Mikaela, son-in-law, Justin, and three-year-grandson Nathan.

Chris said: "I was looked after incredibly well by everyone at the hospital. This gift to The Medway Hospital Charity is to say thank you for saving my life and for providing such excellent care."

Donna Law, Charity and Fundraising Manager, said: "We were delighted to receive this unexpected, incredibly generous donation from Chris and Brenda. It's always so lovely to hear from patients who have received the best of care. We will use this gift to further enhance patient experience at Medway Maritime Hospital by providing those extras that fall outside of the NHS budget."

- If you would like to learn more about donating to The Medway Hospital Charity, please email medwayft.charity@nhs.net or call **01634 825398**.



Your say Tell us about your experience!

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

Find out about our Friends and Family Test on page 21.

Medway NHS Foundation Trust

MedwayNHS



I'm currently in treatment at **Galton Day Unit**. The staff are incredible. I couldn't have gotten through all I have without them. **Breast care unit** also amazing! And the staff on **Lawrence Ward** took care of me and got me back on my feet. Smiles and compassion always on each department.

I've had both my hips done at Medway in the last six months, both as **day cases**, different consultant. It's a **fabulous pathway** to be part of, to be able to **recover at home** with remote monitoring and phone calls. The orthopaedic teams are brilliant.



I am writing to you to express my deep gratitude and thanks to Mr Javed Burki, Consultant Urologist. I was unfortunately diagnosed with prostate cancer and offered treatment in the form of a robotic prostatectomy. Mr Burki provided me with the diagnosis, discussed the treatment options and performed the surgery himself. He has been reassuring and very supportive throughout the whole process. The surgery was successful with no known complications, and I credit Mr Burki and his team for this.

- from a letter sent to Jayne Black, Chief Executive

Ozfest raises £4,735 to support young patients with cancer

By Donna Law

Three-and-a-half years after starting chemotherapy for acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, a delighted Oscar Maxwell has rung the bell to signal the end of his treatment.

Oscar (16), was joined by his parents, Catherine and Mike, and his twin sister, Holly, to celebrate this important milestone.

His grateful family was so thankful for the excellent care he received at Medway Maritime Hospital, they hosted a comedy night, Ozfest, to raise money for the children's oncology fund.

Their generous donation of £4,735 will support other young patients and their families going through a cancer journey.

Mum Catherine said: "The whole children's oncology team, in particular Debbie and Katie, has been so kind to

Oscar and our family and we cannot thank them enough. In recognition of their care, we wanted to give something back and support other families on their cancer journey. We decided on Ozfest, a comedy night, as we have comedians for friends.

"The event raised an incredible £4,735 and we'd like to thank everyone who came along, to those who made donations and to comedians Steve Rawlings, Geoff Boyz, John Lenahan, Paul Adams and Richard Morton for giving their time up to host this wonderful event.



A special cake to mark the occasion

“...WE WANTED TO GIVE SOMETHING BACK AND SUPPORT OTHER FAMILIES ON THEIR CANCER JOURNEY.”



"Oscar started to feel unwell towards the end of August 2021 and was admitted to Darent Valley Hospital on 2 September 2021, being diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia within four hours. Within days he moved to St George's Hospital, Tooting, for further tests and the fitting of a port-a-cath. It was then on to The Royal Marsden Hospital for his initial treatment and three-year treatment plan.

"Oscar is amazing. Ever the optimist, he took a great interest in his treatment and remained upbeat throughout. When asked how he felt, his usual response was 'good'! Of course, he had his moments when he was sad and frustrated, but with the support of friends and family, and his beloved Nanny Pat, he maintained a high level of positivity. Although his treatment is over, Oscar will continue to be under the watchful eye of the paediatric oncology department at Medway Maritime Hospital and the Royal Marsden Hospital for the near future.

"He is now looking forward to a 'normal' life, spending more time with his family and friends, taking a full and active part in his school-life at Ebbsfleet Academy and sitting his GCSEs this summer."

- All smiles: Oscar with his parents and twin sister after ringing the end of treatment bell



- Comedians Geoff Boyz, Richard Morton, John Lenahan, Steve Rawlings and Paul Adams with Oscar Maxwell at Ozfest.

SUPPORT THE MEDWAY HOSPITAL CHARITY

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

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

For more information, please get in touch:

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



Gold award for commitment to patient safety

Medway NHS Foundation Trust has been awarded Gold status for the second year running for the successful completion of local data audits in relation to patient safety.

The National Joint Registry (NJR) Quality Data Provider collects information on all hip, knee, ankle, elbow, and shoulder replacement operations, to monitor the performance of joint replacement implants and the effectiveness of different types of surgery, improving clinical standards to benefit patients.

Under the 'NJR Quality Data Provider' award scheme, hospitals can achieve gold, silver or bronze status for reaching patient safety standards and targets. To achieve 'Gold', the hospital had to achieve a 99 to 100 per cent



- **Gold standard:** All smiles from the Orthopaedic Theatre Team compliance rate for the number of joint replacement procedures submitted to the registry matching the number carried out and recorded on its Patient Administration System (PAS). Howard Cottam, Medical Director for Surgery and Anaesthetics, said: "Inaccurate or missing data can compromise patient safety, so we're delighted to be recognised for our culture of data collection."



Hospital simulation event recognised at prestigious awards

We were named finalists at a national awards ceremony in recognition of our innovative 'Simway Hospital' project.

The annual, simulated clinical training programme – believed to be one of the first of its kind in the UK – is run in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University and helps prepare new Foundation Year One (F1) doctors for their roles at the hospital.

"Simway Hospital" allows participants to take on their new roles, apply and improve clinical skills using state-of-the-art simulation equipment, and

integrate with colleagues, helping step from simulation to working with patients as more confident and competent clinicians. By hosting the event annually, we have become a recognised leader in medical education, setting a benchmark for excellence in training and care.

The most recent edition of 'Simway Hospital', held in August 2024, was bigger and better than ever before,

with close to 200 people taking part, including more than 50 new F1 doctors and other hospital staff, as well as volunteers and local students.

The project was among just six finalists in the 'Workforce and Wellbeing Initiative of the Year' category at the HSJ Partnership Awards 2025 in London. Although the team didn't win the main prize, it was still a fantastic achievement to be recognised at this level.

- **Simway Hospital facilitators including from left:** Dr Ashike Choudhury, Director of Medical Education and Consultant in Emergency Medicine; Gemma Dockrell, Clinical Simulation Operational Manager; Dr Felicity Brokke, Consultant Neonatologist; and Dr Bethan Firmin.



Hospital takes part in UK-first children's diabetes study

By Amanda Crawford



More than 300 children have been recruited at Medway Maritime Hospital, as part of the UK-first ELSA (Early Surveillance for Autoimmune diabetes) study.

The innovative study, which offers risk screening for type 1 diabetes for children aged three to 13, is the largest project of its kind in the country.

Dr Mhd lyad Ramadan, the hospital's Principal Investigator for the study

said: "By testing for antibodies – protein markers found in the blood – we can assess the risk of developing type 1 diabetes.

"ELSA is testing for four specific antibodies. As the number of antibodies a child has increases, so does their risk of developing type 1 diabetes in the future. A child with two antibodies will have a 75 per cent chance of showing symptoms within the next 10 years.

"We continue to collaborate with the local paediatric diabetes team and schools to raise awareness and encourage participation in this important study."

Help be part of research at Medway

Our Research and Innovation Team is offering screening clinics at Medway Maritime Hospital.

Laura Adams, Senior Clinical Research Nurse, said: "Taking part is very quick and easy. Children are given a simple finger stick blood test to find out their risk of developing type 1 diabetes in the future."

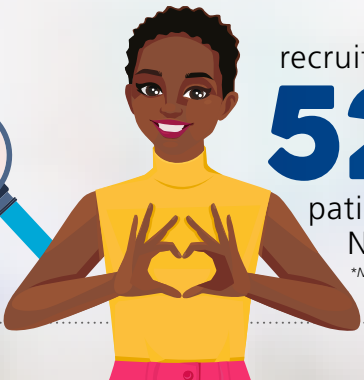
Visit www.medway.nhs.uk and search 'ELSA diabetes study' to find out more and book your place.



Riley and Cory are two of the children taking part in the study. Riley said: "It didn't really hurt, it just stung a little bit and I got a sticker, which was great." Mum Amy said: "My husband is a Type 1 diabetic, so we have been wanting to get Riley and Cory tested to see if they are at risk of the disease, so this was perfect timing."

Since 1 April 2024 we have:

conducted 54 research studies



recruited 5231 patients into NIHR* studies

*National Institute for Health Research

Our improvement programme making an impact

We follow the 'Patient First' improvement system. This helps us focus on the areas where we most need to improve in order to provide better care for our patients.



Almost three years since its launch, we are seeing real change...

Fewer staff leaving within two years

One area we have been focusing on under Patient First has been to **reduce the number of staff leaving the Trust** within two years of starting work with us.

Staff retention is important as staff who feel **valued and happy** at work will provide **better care to our patients**.

We are pleased to say that over six months, we were able to **bring this figure down** from 22 per cent in July 2023 to around 13 per cent in December 2024.

We will **continue to monitor** this to make sure that the changes we have made to keep staff longer continue to work.



More patients waiting fewer than four hours in our Emergency Department

We have made considerable efforts to **reduce the number of patients waiting** more than four hours in our Emergency Department.

Between March and November 2024, we consistently achieved 76 per cent of patients waiting fewer than four hours. However, the national target is 78 per cent, so we know we need to do better. We remain **focused on improving performance** in ED and on **improving flow and discharge processes**, so that we can move people to where they need to be, or discharge them home, more quickly.

Top visitor impressed by our progress

Earlier this year, we were delighted to welcome Dr Amar Shah, National Clinical Director for Improvement at NHS England, who visited our hospital to see our improvement programme in action.

He said: "I think you should be hugely proud of the progress that you've made in such a short space of time. There is much for the rest of the country to learn from your work."



Come and see who's in our 'Spotlight'

Every Thursday at 8.15am in our main entrance (outside First Rate Café and Shop), we hold an open session about recent or ongoing improvements which everyone is welcome to join, whether they are staff, patients, family, carers or visitors to the hospital.

Please do come along and hear about the great work we are doing.



We really value your feedback

Recently, we shared the progress we have made on Friends and Family Test responses.

When patients are discharged from hospital, they are asked to fill in the Friends and Family Test (FFT) which includes questions about their experience with us and whether they would recommend the hospital as a place to receive care.

Under Patient First, we have been focusing on increasing the number of respondents to the test who would recommend us as a place to receive care.

Our target is 95 per cent. Since June 2024, the figure has been consistently between 90 per cent and 93 per cent, which is a great improvement, but we are not quite there yet. We will continue our focus on FFT and are taking new approaches to learning from and acting on patient feedback.

If you are a patient and are asked to complete the FFT, please take a few minutes to do so – we do look at the feedback very closely, so that we can further improve the care and experience you have when you come into hospital.

Visit our website www.medway.nhs.uk or scan the QR code below.



Shaping the future of care at our Quality Priorities event

In February, we welcomed patients, families, carers and members of our community to Medway Maritime Hospital for our Quality Priorities public event. This was a fantastic opportunity for people to share their thoughts on where we should focus our efforts to improve care in 2025/26.

The event began with a warm welcome from Sarah Vaux, Interim Chief Nursing Officer, followed by Lyndsay Barrow, Head of Quality and Patient Safety, who provided an update on our progress against the Quality Priorities for 2024/25; celebrating achievements and identifying areas for further improvement.

Attendees then took part in interactive discussions, exploring three key areas of quality improvement:

- **Patient Safety** – keeping safety at the heart of everything we do.
- **Patient Experience** – improving how people feel about their care.
- **Clinical Effectiveness** – striving for the best possible health outcomes.

Following the group discussions, we shared key themes and insights. The feedback and ideas gathered will help shape our Quality Priorities for 2025/26, ensuring they reflect the needs and expectations of our patients and community.

The event ended with a dedicated question and answer session.

One attendee said afterwards that the event “demonstrated the Trust’s desire to listen and involve service users.”

A huge thank you to everyone who took part.



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

Medway NHS Foundation Trust MedwayNHS

Introducing our Coffee and Chat sessions

Thank you to everyone who supported our first Coffee and Chat session earlier this year. Our Engagement Team and Public Governors spent time talking with the public in the Atrium – and it was a great success!

This informal session provided an opportunity for governors to hear directly from patients, members, and local people about their views and experiences at the hospital, all while enjoying a hot drink. These insights are invaluable in helping our governors represent their community effectively.

The Coffee and Chat sessions will run regularly throughout the year, providing an ongoing opportunity for governors to engage with the community and make sure we stay connected.



Upcoming sessions

in the Atrium, Green Zone, Level 2

- Monday 28 April 2025
10am to 12pm
- Friday 11 July 2025
2pm to 4pm
- Tuesday 14 October 2025
10am to 12pm

Come and say hello, have a chat and enjoy a hot drink.



There is no need to book, but feel free to let us know if you are planning to attend so that we can get in touch if there are any changes to the date/time.

Up to date information about Governors and events can be found on our website www.medway.nhs.uk

Governor elections coming soon

We will soon be holding elections for two seats on our Council of Governors. One seat in the Medway constituency, and one in the Rest of England and Wales.

What is a governor?

- Governors provide a link for local people to their hospital
- They attend regular engagement events to meet patients and listen to their views
- They also attend quarterly Council of Governor meetings, ensuring that those views are heard and considered when making changes.

Please be aware: You must be a member of the Trust to stand as a governor.

To register your interest, please email met-tr.members-medway@nhs.net

Further information about the role, the elections and how to become member is available on our website www.medway.nhs.uk



Pay for your parking at the exit barrier by card or contactless.



You can **scan most blue badges at the exit barrier too.**

Give it a try or ask at the Security Desk.



There's no need to queue at a payment machine.