

UHNM NEWS

ISSUE 12

SPRING EDITION

UHNM Charity
receives £2
million donation

Major trauma
consultant
to represent
Team GB as a
Para Olympian

Dermatologist
delivers baby
mid-air on flight

UHNM recruit more than 90
International nurses





Welcome from Tracy Bullock, Chief Executive

The first 2022 edition of UHNM News highlights just a small sample of the amazing work our staff are doing across County Hospital and Royal Stoke University Hospital. I am immensely proud to be the Chief Executive and of everyone who works at UHNM. Our staff continue to go above and beyond to care for our patients, people who use our services and their carers and loved ones. They have had to adapt and change what they do to keep everyone safe during the pandemic and I have been inspired and impressed by the stories I hear every week about how members of our special UHNM family have gone out of their way to help those most in need.

Many of our services remain under immense pressure and our teams are doing everything possible to see and treat patients as quickly as possible. We are investing in new technology and equipment where it will help our staff to see patients quickly. We are recruiting more clinical staff as well as growing our own talent through training and development programmes. We remain committed to providing the best care possible, something we are passionate about here at UHNM.

The support from local people is overwhelming and this warmth and affection is welcomed and valued by everyone at UHNM. Your feedback is really important to us, so please remember that if you or your loved ones need any help our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) team have offices at both County and Royal Stoke University Hospitals and you can drop in, make an appointment, email patientadvice.uhnm@nhs.net or call 01782 676450. Our teams also really appreciate the many compliments they receive - thank you so much to all those who take the time to do this.

Thank you to all our staff, volunteers, patients, service users and partners for your on-going support of your local hospitals.

Tracy Bullock

Dermatologist delivers baby mid-air on India flight

Dr Manju Paul, consultant dermatologist, was on an Air India flight from London to Cochin to see her family when a passenger went into labour prematurely.

She said: "About two hours into the flight there was an emergency call. I've always been prepared to deal with chest pain or similar but never thought I would end up helping to deliver a baby.

"Within 10 minutes of the call for medical staff we took her to the front of the plane because it was clear she was in labour. There was another doctor and four nurses and we were all trying to work in a very small, confined space in the airplane, which was pretty challenging. But the teamwork was great.

"The worry was that the baby was so tiny and we had another seven hours left on the flight, so the decision was made to re-route to Frankfurt and allow mum and baby to receive medical care. Thankfully, the plane was fairly well equipped with medical equipment and the crew were also experienced in handling surprise events.

"People on the plane were anxious, it was stressful and



Dr Manju Paul and team

some were praying. However, it was hugely satisfying and I was thrilled to be able to help as part of the team effort."

Dr Paul has worked at UHNM as a consultant since 2016.

Professor Jim Nolan given lifetime achievement award from the British Cardiovascular Intervention Society

Professor Jim Nolan has won a lifetime career achievement award for his incredible work in cardiovascular research and medicine spanning over 30 years from the British Cardiovascular Intervention Society.

Jim, who is Professor of Interventional Cardiology at UHNM and Keele University, introduced the use of the 'transradial access technique' into the UK. The cardiac unit at the Royal Stoke was the first centre in the UK to extensively use this technique in patients undergoing cardiac procedures. This procedure has become the preferred approach for coronary intervention in the UK and globally, and much of this change has been driven by the educational and research efforts of the unit here in the Royal Stoke.

More than 90 per cent of UK patients now undergo this method of treatment, which is safer and requires less aftercare.

Professor Nolan said: "Cardiology is a fascinating specialty and I have always been interested in improving the way we do things. When we perform procedures we are able to help people and can actually change the course of a patient's life.

"It's a tremendous honour and a privilege to get this award. No amount of money can buy something like this. I have great respect for the Society, so it means a lot coming from them.

Professor Nolan's career has spanned more than 30 years. He trained in Leeds but has also spent time in London and Edinburgh.



Professor Jim Nolan, Interventional Radiology



Dr Amal Elzubair, Paediatric Registrar

UHNM's paediatric team scoops the 'best training unit' award at the West Midlands PAFTAs (Paediatric Awards for Training Achievements).

UHNM beat more than 10 other organisations to scoop the best training unit, which is given by paediatric trainees. Winners were required to demonstrate excellence in education, training and support in line with the principles of the RCPCH (Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health) trainees' charter.

Paediatric Registrar Dr Amal Elzubair, from Sudan, joined the team at UHNM in 2016 and was nominated for the 'best senior trainee' award.

Amal said: "Coming to a foreign country and joining a new healthcare system comes with its challenges and the transition can be difficult for international medical graduates until they find the right support channels.

"I was fortunate to start my paediatrics training at Staffordshire Children's Hospital at Royal Stoke, working with the paediatric team here is a great place to start as a registrar. You get an excellent level of support and exposure to lots of different specialties because it's a very busy department which covers a large geographical area. Fortunately, this means

that you get to develop a lot of skills in a short space of time. Consultants are keen to support trainees in gaining the knowledge and clinical skills needed to pass their exams, progress in their career and pursue their interests.

"It's a great honour and a privilege to be nominated for the PAFTA award, but everything we have achieved has been through collaborative team effort and I am really just representing my colleagues. My passion for paediatrics and the resilience and skills I have gained from my experience motivate me to give back and do more. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the department and give a special thanks to my supervisors, who have gone the extra mile to support me. I remind myself every day that I don't come to work to make a living, I come to make a difference."

Royal Stoke's neonatal unit was also nominated for the 'best training unit' award, with Dr Sim Rao nominated for 'training hero' and Dr Meghana Pearson for 'education supervisor of the year'.

Life changing hand surgery launched at UHNM

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent patients with hand trauma are to benefit from life changing surgery available closer to home after a new service was launched at UHNM.

Specialist brachial plexus surgery repairs the group of nerves coming out from the root of the neck which supply sensation and function to the shoulder, elbow, hand and wrist. In adults, they are usually injured in road traffic collisions, falls from height, fractures or stab wounds.

Mr Akshay Malhotra, consultant orthopaedic hand and wrist surgeon at UHNM, said: "The injuries we see can be quite debilitating for patients due to significant physical, mental and social impact. The surgery is aimed at providing these patients with a better quality of life, enabling them to manage their day-to-day activities with increased confidence and ability."

Mr Graham Mckie, of Hixon, near Stafford, was the first patient to undergo specialist brachial plexus surgery at County Hospital in April 2021. He needed treatment following a near fatal motorbike accident on the A34 in August 2020.

The 54-year-old ex-policeman and motorcycle instructor said: "My leg required reconstructive surgery and I was in an induced coma for three weeks.

"I didn't have full use of my right arm either and following a number of tests it was suggested I had brachial plexus surgery. This has meant I will have no need for nerve or muscle grafts and I have been told in time there will be no holding me back.

"I only live 15 minutes down the road from County Hospital so to be able to have theatre there was great and the facilities were phenomenal.

"I cannot thank all the staff enough. Everyone has been amazing, especially considering the circumstances and pressures of Covid-19 during my time in hospital. I owe them my life."



Dr Akshay Malhotra,
Consultant hand and wrist surgeon



Graham Mckie

International Nurses

By the end of 2021 the UHNM family had welcomed more than 90 new nurses from overseas. New recruits have joined teams at both County and Royal Stoke hospitals as part of the international effort following a huge recruitment campaign. New nurses arrived from across the world and successful candidates are now settling in to life at UHNM.

The nurses did not have an easy start to their new careers, with many having to quarantine on arrival in the UK due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Recruits begin as 'adaptation nurses' and are required to complete an OSCE (objective structured clinical examination) before they are eligible to join the NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council) register as a qualified nurse in the UK. This exam tests their knowledge and aptitude to perform nursing skills to a high standard.

Stella Underwood, UHNM international nurse lead, said: "Our new nurses have been assigned to positions across the Trust and were allocated to clinical areas based on their prior nursing experience. We are extremely happy with how they have applied themselves and they have settled in so well. Although they are registered nurses, they have never practiced in the UK and so require a lot of support from ward staff, which I'm pleased to say they have received.

"In 2022, we are hoping to continue recruiting more overseas nurses whilst developing the nurses we have already taken on.

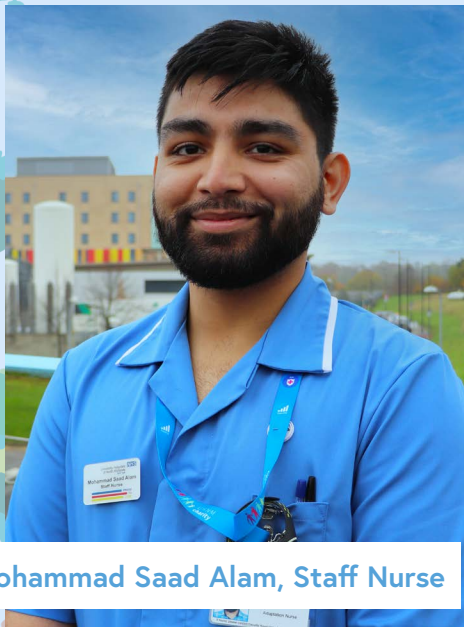
"This has been my first experience of overseas recruitment. It has proven challenging at times, but it has been very satisfying and I very much look forward to the new things ahead."

92 nurses were recruited in just six months during the pandemic.



There are 102 nationalities at UHNM





Mohammad Saad Alam, Staff Nurse

Hello, my name is Mohammad (Saad) and I am from Delhi, India. I joined the UHNM family in July 2019 and I am currently working on the Short Stay Unit.

My father is a doctor and used to run a clinic. I grew up watching him sacrificing his sleep for the sake of his patients and when I look back I think these were the things that pushed me to opt for a career in medical care.

I am very happy to be a part of UHNM family, everyone I have worked with so far has been very supportive and approachable. Everyone has helped me make my transition so smooth.

There are a vast number of things one can do in nursing, but I would like to become a Professor in Nursing in the future.

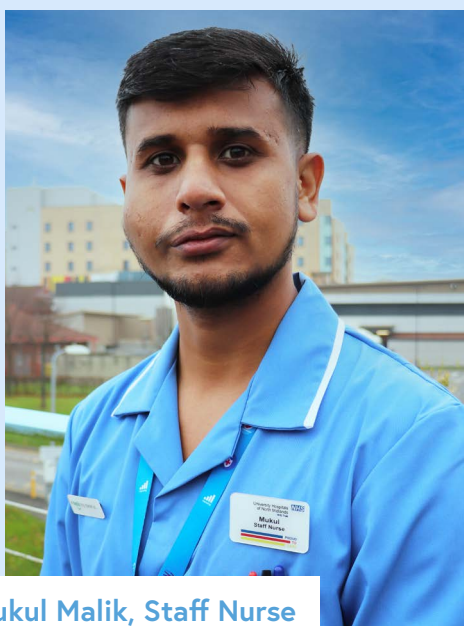


Ravi Ananathan, Staff Nurse

Hi! My name is Ravi and I'm from Tamilnadu, India. I came to the UK in July 2021 and when I had the interview I was so impressed by this Trust and I knew that I wanted to work at Royal Stoke Hospital.

I always wanted to work in healthcare so when I had the opportunity to be a nurse I jumped at it because nursing is the profession where you get to have the most patient contact and deliver care to those who need it the most. The support I have received from Stella, Anne and Paul is enormous and flawless. They have helped us adjust to life in the UK and it is very strange seeing the sun out at night until 9pm in the summer to seeing all the snow in winter! I am currently working in the critical care unit and the support there has been amazing and they are helping me adjust to the NHS

In the future I would like to stay in critical care and do more advanced practice courses. It's exciting when you have found your dream place to work and I'm always thankful I was chosen to work at Royal Stoke. It's happiness all over!



Mukul Malik, Staff Nurse

Hi, my name is Makul and I am from Meerut, northern India. I joined UHNM in August 2021.

Becoming a nurse wasn't much of a strategic decision for me, I just went with it - but as soon as I started caring for patients I realised it is the most rewarding work I can do. While being a nurse you meet all kind of beautiful souls at their most vulnerable stages and if I can provide even the slightest comfort that gives me happiness.

Working at UHNM feels like a dream for a 23-year-old guy coming from a third world country. Staff here are the most considerate people I have ever met. There was one time when I had arranged my duties for three continuous days and my manager came to me and changed them so I could have a rest in between. Moving to another country was a big step, especially as no one in my family has ever left the country but the team made everything really easy and I wasn't worried about a single thing.

In the future I want to become the most efficient nurse I can be. There are hundreds of opportunities at UHNM, I can go in any direction and I know there will be support available for me at every step.

Cancer patients benefit from innovative prostate implant

More than 50 men have so far benefited from the use of the SpaceOAR® hydrogel implant, which can significantly reduce the side effects of radiotherapy by more than 70 per cent.

The SpaceOAR® hydrogel implant is injected into the space between the prostate and the rectum before curative radiotherapy treatment and can significantly reduce the side effects of radiotherapy by more than 70 per cent. A brief day case procedure is carried out to implant the gel, which protects the organs at risk from potential damage caused by radiation.

Prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer in men, with around 130 people diagnosed in the UK every day.

Thirty per cent of men who develop prostate cancer will be treated with radiotherapy. Of these, about 1 in 10 patients will suffer long term side effects, including bowel and bladder dysfunction, reduced sexual function and reduced quality of life.

UHNM's radiotherapy team are celebrating a year of the treatment being available at Royal Stoke University Hospital, having begun during the pandemic in October 2020.

71-year-old Dave Clark, 71, is a retired science teacher from Stafford. He was given the option of receiving the SpaceOAR® hydrogel implant after being diagnosed with prostate cancer in March 2021.

Dave said: "I was more than happy to have the treatment because I knew it was going to provide me with a level of protection. I would definitely tell other people to go for it, there's not a down side really.

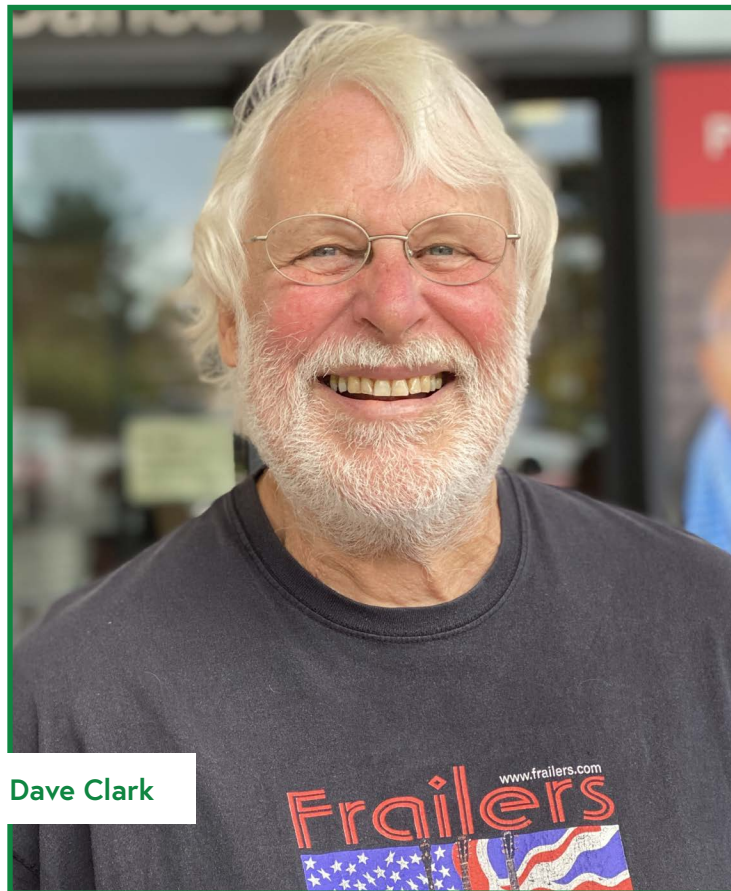
"The staff and facilities at UHNM were amazing. I was treated on a brand new machine. It was all very reassuring. "The whole process went by very easily and

comfortably without any upset, there were no problems whatsoever. I can't imagine it being any easier from a patient's point of view."

Studies have shown that side effects of radiotherapy - rectal pain, bleeding and diarrhoea - can be reduced by more than 70 per cent when using the gel, significantly improving quality of life for those battling prostate cancer.

Dr Rajanee Bhana is the first consultant oncologist to introduce the treatment in the West Midlands.

Dr Bhana said: "We want all patients who come to us with prostate cancer to know that this pre-treatment is available to them. We are particularly proud that we were able to launch this service during a pandemic. It makes a real difference to people's lives and we are very pleased that more than 50 men have now been able to receive it."



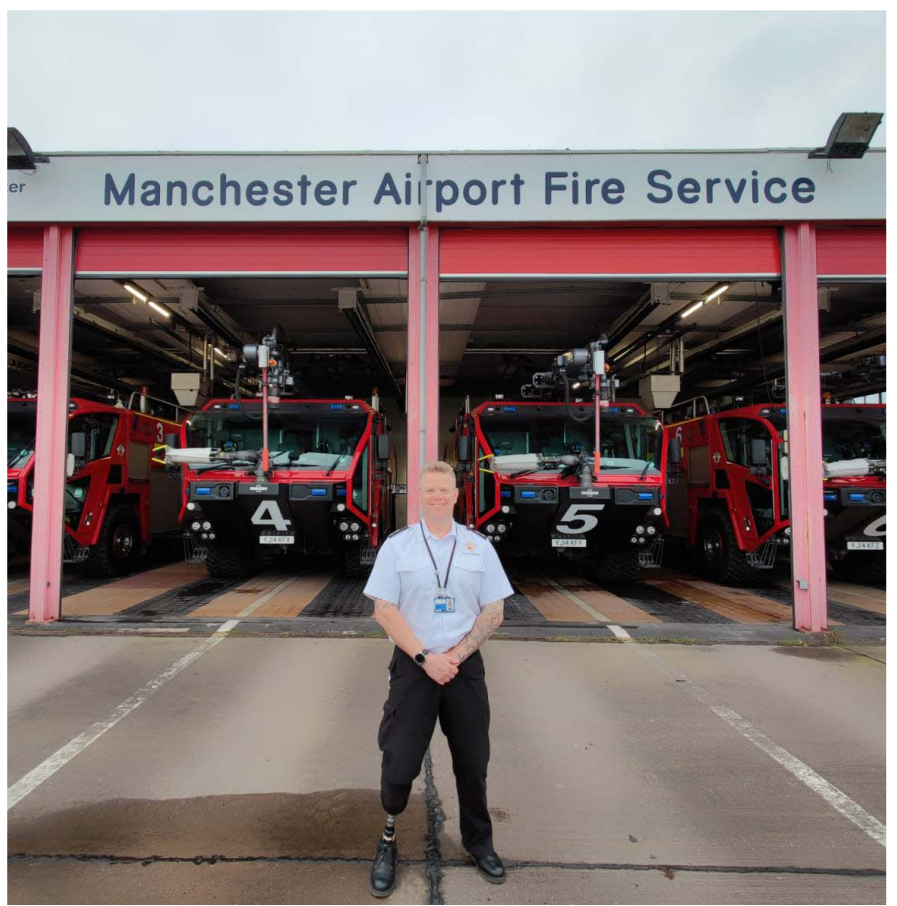
Dave Clark



Dave Clark and Dr Rajanee Bhana



Matthew Bourner



Firefighter amputee defies odds following accident

A firefighter who had his right leg amputated below the knee following a road traffic accident has defied the odds by returning to full service in little over a year.

Matthew Bourner, of Nantwich, was clipped by a car whilst traveling to work on his motorbike. After initially being told it would be two years before he would walk again, Matthew returned to his job at Manchester Airport 14 months later. Thanks to the expertise of clinicians in Royal Stoke University Hospital's A&E and orthopaedics departments Matthew has now become one of only three amputee firefighters in the country to work for the fire service.

Matthew said: "If not for the care and attention of Dr Ann-Marie Morris in A&E and Mr Neal in Orthopaedics I wouldn't be here now. Ann Marie was the first person to lead my care and we think so highly of her for what she has done. I had to make a quick decision to have my leg off, but Mr Neal managed to save my arm. All the nurses on the ward were fantastic too.

"We had a few bad days when we were initially told that it would be two years before I could walk. I was really worried about my job and how I'd ever be able to do it again. But in the end I was able to get back much

sooner than anticipated. I take fitness very seriously and was determined to do as much as I could to keep myself in good condition, even if it involved getting up at 5am in the morning to go for a swim."

Matthew and partner Melissa Pape, 46, even climbed Mount Snowden in June of this year with a group of friends.

Matthew said: "The climb was hard going because we chose the Pyg trail, which is one of the hardest routes. It's really steep and involves clambering over boulders. People we met kept stopping to shake my hand on the way up and when I got to the top, loads of people clapped.

"If I can do it, anyone can do it. Ultimately when something like this happens you have no other choice but to carry on. I think it's really important to approach situations like this with a positive attitude and a sense of humour. It helps to get you through."



Dr Apurna Jegannathen. Consultant Oncologist

Innovative trial aims to save patients unnecessary chemotherapy

Breast cancer patients at UHNM are benefiting from an innovative new approach to cancer treatment. The OPTIMA (Optimal Personalised Treatment of early breast cancer using Multi-parameter Analysis) trial aims to establish how responsive a patient’s tumour will be to chemotherapy.

The ‘Prosigna’ test - used as part of the trial - examines how genes work in a sample of cancer tissue. UHNM has become the top recruiter to the trial in the UK, leading out of 111 other trusts.

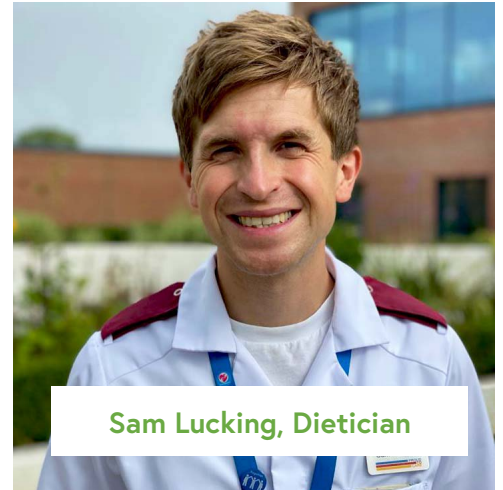
Ida Bentley, 67, of Stafford, was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2018. Ida took part in the OPTIMA trial and underwent chemotherapy after results from the Prosigna test established she would benefit from the treatment. She is now in remission.

Ida said: “I found a lump in my armpit and went to the GP. At first I wasn’t too concerned, thinking that I’d likely be one of the ‘worried well’. But it turned out there was an issue and in fact I had an additional lump.

“I feel it was worth taking part in the trial because it gave me peace of mind and a sense of reassurance.”

The trial began in July 2017 and will end in December 2021. To date 2,679 people are taking part in the trial across the UK, with 68 recruited at UHNM.

Dr Apurna Jegannathen, consultant oncologist, said: “It’s phenomenal that UHNM is leading the way on this trial and we will work hard to keep up the momentum and continue to maintain and secure this position, which will ensure as many people as possible have the chance to benefit from this important research. There is no doubt that the trial and subsequent treatment has extended Ida’s life.”



Sam Lucking, Dietician

A UHNM dietician is helping to lead practice on the nutritional care of Covid patients.

Sam Lucking, based at Royal Stoke, recently won Clinical Nutrition magazine’s ‘Writer of the Year’ award for his work examining best practice in critical care.

Sam said: “Looking after any patient presents a challenge, but with Covid there are added complications because they can sometimes be completely sedated and ventilated, requiring enteral feeding and often in a prone position.

“We looked at different kinds of patients and examined the ways various dietetic and medical interventions affected them. We also discussed nutritional support, including oral nutrition and artificial nutrition. Then we completed three-month follow-up investigations which looked at the longstanding effects of the virus and the effects of an intensive care stay.

“The work we have undertaken will help guide the nutritional care of critically ill Covid patients and because we had such great engagement with the project across various hospitals throughout the country any data collected by will be more extensive and therefore more reliable.”



Dr Timothy Kemp, Consultant in Infectious Diseases, (front, left) leads the RECOVERY Trial research team at UHNM



UHNM imaging team with Dr Desiree O'Leary, Director of Education at Keele University

UHNM's research and development team continue to play an active role in the fight against Covid-19.

To date the Trust has enrolled 344 patients to the RECOVERY (Randomised Evaluation of Covid-19 Therapy) Trial, which focuses on testing existing treatments for Covid-19. The trial has so far discovered three effective treatments (dexamethasone, tocilizumab and Regeneron's monoclonal antibody) which are administered to patients severely affected by the disease.

NHS England estimate that around a million lives have been saved between July 2020 and March 2021 thanks to the use of dexamethasone.

282 patients from Royal Stoke University Hospital and 59 patients from County Hospital have been enrolled at UHNM. Current total recruitment in the UK stands in excess of 45,000 participants.

Dr Timothy Kemp, Consultant in Infectious Diseases at UHNM, said: "The RECOVERY Trial has led to a number of new treatments being introduced as effective therapies and we hope that more treatments will be identified as the trial progresses. "We'd really like to thank all of the staff both clinically and in our research team for their hard work on this and the many other Covid-19 studies that are running in our hospitals, but I would particularly like to pay tribute to those individuals who have participated in the trial.

"I'm very keen that as many patients as possible get the opportunity to be enrolled into the RECOVERY Trial. This is being made possible by the collaboration between clinical teams and the UHNM research team."

UHNM is set to lead the development of diagnostic care in the area by becoming an innovative Imaging Academy Hub.

Following a successful bid the Trust has secured £500k in funding to set up an academy in partnership with Keele University and will join only a select number of hub sites commissioned by Health Education England (HEE) across the Midlands region.

Training academies provide multi-professional environments where training and education of the future workforce is the primary focus, maximising the expertise of experienced educators and supervisors across a broad patch.

HEE Midlands also plan to extend the remit of the academy to include mammography, medical physics and nuclear medicine.

Theatre practitioner spots life-threatening melanoma in patient



Julie Reed

Lorna Duffin was being prepared for emergency surgery to remove her gall bladder when Julie noticed a mole on her back and suggested it should be checked out.

Lorna Duffin was being prepared for emergency surgery to remove her gall bladder when Julie noticed a mole on her back and suggested it should be checked out.

Lorna said: “Julie said she thought the mole didn’t look quite right and urged me to see the doctor as soon as possible.

“As soon as I was discharged I made an appointment with my GP who referred me back to the hospital. I was then informed that the mole was a melanoma and that I would need to have it removed. Hearing it was cancer was very scary but thankfully they managed to remove all of it. As it had been caught so early and was still at ‘stage one’, I did not need any further treatment. I have now been fully discharged from the skin cancer clinic.

“I cannot believe how lucky I have been. If I’d not had my gall bladder removed, I would never have met Julie. How lucky I was that she was working that day and was so vigilant and went above and beyond her role. She could so easily not have said anything and I would have continued on with my life with the cancer growing and not knowing until it may have been too late.

“Julie not only saved my life, she made my future secure for my children and husband and we will never be able to thank her enough. I doubt she realises just what she did that day and the life that she saved but I will never ever forget it and will be eternally grateful.”

Julie said: “To me, I was just doing my job and what anyone else would do. Because I have had to have some checked myself I knew what I was looking for and brought it to Lorna’s attention. It’s a good deed done.”

Claire Mckirdy and Dave Smith

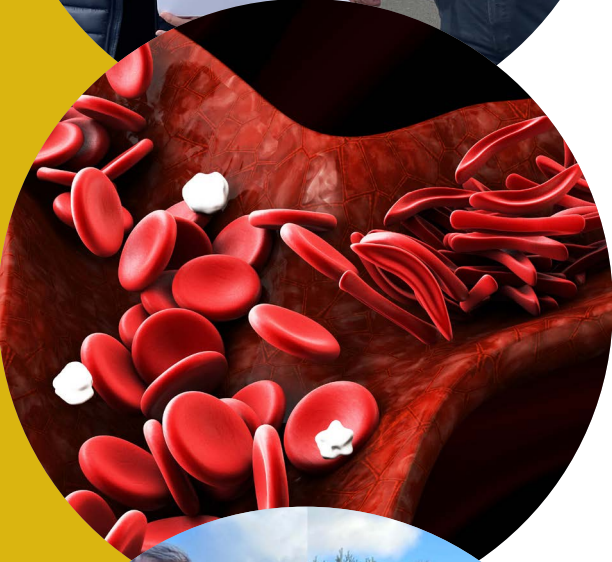


Veteran Aware Hospital

UHNM is pleased to announce that it has been named as a Veteran Aware Trust in recognition of its commitment to improving NHS care for veterans, reservists, members of the armed forces and their families. The Trust is now one of 64 providers that have been accredited as exemplars of the best care for veterans and leading the way in improving veterans' care within the NHS.

Patient talks to Trust Board about Sickle Cell Disease

Aanton Matthew Aleem Bailey made history recently as the first patient to present to Trust Board from his hospital bed. Aanton, 32, and mother Carol Burt wanted to raise awareness of the condition and what staff can do to improve care. Sickle cell disease is a serious and lifelong health condition which is particularly common in people with an African or Caribbean background. It can severely impact on a person's daily life, with triggers including extreme temperatures and stress.



Twins celebrate long service awards

Both started working in Sterile Services at Royal Stoke 20 years ago when they turned 16 and have continued their journey at the hospital ever since. Now aged 37, Andrew (left) is now Lead Coder at Royal Stoke and Adam (right) still works in sterile services.



Twins Andrew and Adam with Director of Strategy Helen Ashley

UHNM surpasses 100 patients on home treatment for kidney failure

There are two types of home dialysis that UHNM offers patients with kidney failure – home haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis. Home dialysis has huge benefits for patients in terms of life expectancy and quality of life and is significantly more cost effective compared to hospital dialysis. UHNM is now one of only six hospitals in the country to have more than 100 people in this form of home care and the largest in-house assisted automated peritoneal dialysis in the country, covering in excess of 150 patient visits per week.



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Prestigious research scholarship awards for staff



Claire Rae, Advanced Speech and Language Therapist



Dr Dargoi Satchi, Consultant Cardiologist

A consultant cardiologist and advanced speech and language therapist have been awarded prestigious research scholarship awards

Dr Dargoi Satchi, consultant cardiologist and Claire Rae, advanced speech and language therapist, have been awarded prestigious research scholarship awards by the National Institute for Health Research Clinical Research Network West Midlands (NIHR CRN WM). Dr Satchi has received an NIHR research scholarship and Claire has been given the NIHR personal development award.

The two-year funding programmes will ensure each is able to develop their knowledge and understanding of research processes and prepare research proposals, resulting in improved care for patients locally and nationally.

Dr Dargoi Satchi, Consultant Cardiologist, said: "I have always been interested in improving patient care with

multiple successful service improvement initiatives and I am so pleased and honoured to get this award. I hope to use any monies obtained to continue to improve the lives of patients locally and nationally."

Claire Rae is based on the Trust's acute rehabilitation and trauma unit (ARTU). The award will enable her to develop as a future investigator, build a portfolio of research and prepare research proposals.

Claire said: "I want to find out what other speech and language therapists do across the country and what is considered best practice as there is very little evidence around this at the moment. Then I'll start to look at the best ways to help patients with language problems as well as post-traumatic amnesia."

Volunteer helps “heartbroken” mother regain hope



Sophie Siddall, Outpatient Volunteer

A mother has thanked hospital volunteer Sophie Siddall for giving her hope again

Feeling devastated after being told her daughter would not attend mainstream school due to disabilities, a patient visited County Hospital for an appointment, where she was greeted by Sophie - “the most positive person she has ever met”.

UHM received a letter of thanks from the mother, which read:

“Shortly before my appointment I had just had a meeting where I had been told that my little girl would be unable to go to mainstream school because her disability needs could not be met. To say I was heartbroken was an understatement.

“I was in two minds about attending as I was so upset, but I went and I’m so glad I did because I was met with a young lady who was disabled and working as a volunteer. She was in a wheelchair and I cannot tell you the impact she had on me at one of my most vulnerable times. From what I thought was a dull future for my daughter, this one person brought light to my life.

“She is the most positive person I’ve ever met and I am so grateful for her as I now know there is definitely a future for disabled children.

“We need to see more disabled people being given the opportunity to live the same as others. They deserve every right.

“I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart, not just for giving this young lady a chance but for helping me see there is a future. I struggled to accept my daughter’s disability, but wow! what an inspiration this lady is. She will definitely be someone I will never forget and I will definitely be telling other parents that the future is not always dark. Sophie is amazing and definitely a voice for other disabled people.”

Sophie has been given the Chief Executive’s award in recognition of the difference she made to this family.

Tracy Bullock, chief executive, said: “People with disabilities add so much value to our organisation and what we do. Sophie has clearly made a massive difference, which is so fantastic.”

Sophie said: “When I was younger I was told I wouldn’t be able to do anything.

“This lady was told that her daughter wouldn’t be able to go to primary school and I was told the same, so knowing I have helped them realise they are not alone and that there is a bright future is fantastic.

“When you go into a work place, you don’t see many disabled people, so for her to see me, I am glad I could give her the feeling of relief, knowing that there can be a future and I am so glad I was able to give her hope.”

Author dietitian reunited with inspiring English teacher

UHM dietitian and published children's author Alison Falkonakis has been reunited with the high school English teacher who inspired her to write.

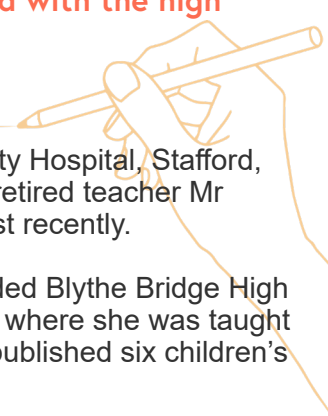


Alison Falkonakis, Dietitian with John Mills

Alison, who works at County Hospital, Stafford, was surprised to find now retired teacher Mr John Mills on her patient list recently.

Alison, 51, of Stone, attended Blythe Bridge High School from 1981 to 1986, where she was taught by Mr Mills. She has now published six children's books.

John has recently published a book of poetry and the two were able to swap works when they met during one of John's appointments.



Patient's life saved with POEM

Patient Maggie Palmer has described how an innovative endoscopic procedure performed at UHM has saved her life.

Surviving only on Cuppa soups and liquids, Maggie lost almost 16 kilogrammes in weight before being diagnosed with 'corkscrew oesophagus', a variant of the condition Achalasia. Maggie underwent the corrective procedure 'Peroral Endoscopic Myotomy' (POEM) and is now able to eat proper meals again.



Maggie Palmer

UHM is the first centre in the West Midlands to perform POEM and the Trust receives referrals from as far away as Wales.

Achalasia is a rare disorder of the food pipe (oesophagus), which can make it difficult to swallow food and drink. Maggie, of Middleton Green, Staffordshire, underwent the POEM procedure in August 2020 at County Hospital, Stafford.

Maggie said: "I had been completely well before developing the problem, it sort of crept up on me. I wasn't totally aware of what was going on, but I couldn't swallow very well and it got to the point where I couldn't have any solid food at all.

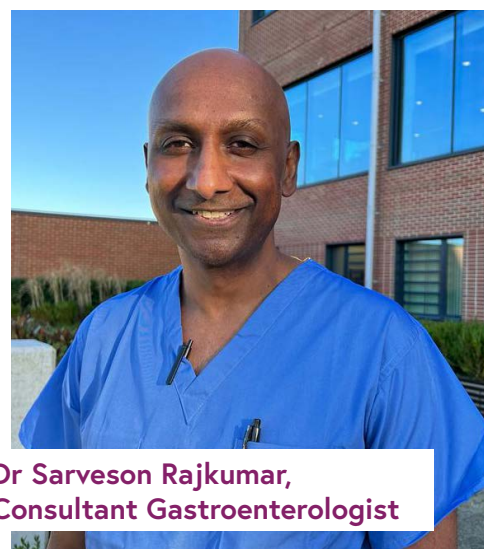
"The POEM procedure saved my life. I wouldn't say things are perfect now but they are certainly much better. I can eat much more normally and my weight

has gone up again. I have to be careful with what I eat now and can't have big portions, but generally it is much better. I find that puddings go down well, especially with custard! UHM's specialist endoscopy team performed their first POEM at County Hospital theatres under general anaesthesia. The procedure was carried out entirely through endoscopy, meaning the patient did not require stitches or sustain any skin wounds.

Dr Sarveson Rajkumar, consultant gastroenterologist and endoscopist at UHM, said: "I am really pleased to be able to start this service at County Hospital and to offer this effective new treatment. POEM is a minimally invasive alternate treatment to surgery for all types of Achalasia.

"It is the treatment of choice for Type III Achalasia (corkscrew oesophagus), previous failed surgical treatment for Achalasia and conditions where the foodpipe goes into spasm, for example Jackhammer Oesophagus and Diffuse Oesophageal Spasm.

"We started POEM in March 2020 as the tenth centre in the UK to perform this innovative endoscopic procedure and I have done 14 procedures so far with excellent patient feedback.



Dr Sarveson Rajkumar, Consultant Gastroenterologist



Stephen Spooner with the Radiotherapy team

New radiotherapy machine enhances cancer care

The first patient to receive treatment on UHNM's new 'Halcyon' radiotherapy accelerator has now completed their care journey.

Mr Stephen Spooner, 74, from Alton in Staffordshire, has become the first patient to receive this treatment for prostate cancer and has now completed his course of radiotherapy. The Halcyon machine can be used to target all areas of the body and can treat larger tumours more effectively. Patients will also benefit from shorter treatment times, considerably enhancing their experience.

Mr Spooner first realised something may be wrong when he noticed blood in his urine. He was referred for further investigation by his GP and received a diagnosis of prostate cancer in March earlier this year. He was the first patient to use the Halcyon.

Mr Spooner said: "I feel very privileged to use this machine and to be here. It has been an enlightening experience to be honest and one I'm truly grateful for.

I'm really appreciative for all the care I've had."

The Halcyon accelerator, has only recently become available in Europe.

Carolyn O'Donovan, Radiotherapy Service Manager, said: "We want to ensure our patients receive the latest and most efficient treatment. This new technology advancement will ensure the treatment and experience we offer to patients remains of the highest possible quality today and into the future."

Dr Craig Edwards, Head of Radiotherapy Physics, said: "The design of the Halcyon is sleeker and more simplified than other machines. Patient satisfaction surveys have shown that they preferred it because it looked similar to a CT or MRI machine and was therefore more familiar to them."

999: Critical Condition

Award-winning documentary 999:Critical Condition, which takes an up-close look at the moments when critical patients with life threatening conditions come through Royal Stoke hospital doors, returned to our screens at the start of the year, with more to come in the Summer.

The series once again reflects the relentless fast pace of the hospital's daily workload and shows the reality of critical decision making in the vital first minutes after a patient arrives at hospital. Read the stories of Charlie, Cara, Martin and Toby who featured in the latest four episodes.

Charlie Moorhouse, 54, was out for a walk in February last year when he suddenly began to feel unwell. Charlie was taken to Royal Stoke University Hospital where doctors discovered he had suffered a heart attack.

After teams at Royal Stoke's trauma centre performed a CT scan it was discovered a burst tumour - described as "a ticking time bomb" - had caused the heart attack.

Mr Anrug Golash, Consultant Urological Surgeon, said: "We used a technique called 'hand-assisted laparoscopic surgery' to treat Charlie's tumour. This method is used quite often at UHNM, due to its specialist centre status."

Charlie said: "I can't fault the staff, they were excellent from start to finish. I'm doing 100% better now and am back at work full time."



Cara Sutton, 26, works at Alder Hey Hospital in Liverpool and was on holiday in Wales when she slipped and fell 80 foot down the side of a waterfall. She was rushed to the Major Trauma Centre at Royal Stoke University Hospital where doctors fought to save her life.

Cara lay in a ravine for approximately four hours before being winched to safety by the mountain rescue team. At Royal Stoke doctors found she had broken her pelvis, ribs and sternum. She also had a fractured spine and vertebrae and a collapsed lung. She was discharged on 9 November approximately two-and-a-half months after being admitted.

Cara said: "I'm generally pretty well considering what I've been through and the other day I managed to walk 10k. It's absolutely amazing how well they were able to put me back together again."



Motorbiking couple Martin Hathaway and Janet Walker were rushed to Royal Stoke's accident and emergency unit last autumn when their motorbike collided with a car. The local grandparents, of Rugeley, were brought into resus within minutes of each after both sustaining serious injuries. Martin, 62, suffered multiple broken bones and Janet, 53, suffered a break, multiple fractures and several broken ribs.

Martin said: "We had been on the road for about 15 minutes when a car pulled out from a t-junction. We



ploughed straight into it at 50 mph, I didn't have time to break. When I came to a bone was sticking out of my leg and there was lots of blood."

Janet said: "I feel well in myself now and am going through physio. Doctors used donor skin from my right thigh to patch up the area around my ankle, it's amazing what they can do."



Wakeboarding enthusiast Toby Yeo, who lives near Chorlton in Greater Manchester, collided with a stationary boat shortly after performing the popular 'air rayley' trick and suffered a badly broken leg. Whilst the incident left him on crutches for three months, doctors initially feared it could have been much worse.

Toby, 30, said: "At first doctors thought I might have damaged my spine and pelvis, but fortunately it turned out they were ok. I've done tricks time and time again, I could do them with my



eyes closed, but this time the cable came all the way back into the shore and I ploughed into the side of a nearby boat.

"I knew it was bad and my leg was bent in an awful kind of way. The ambulance crew wrapped me up, gave me painkillers and took me to hospital."

After initial concern, scans performed in the hospital's radiology department revealed Toby had a narrow escape, with just a clean break in his left thigh bone.



Major trauma consultant to represent Team GB as a Para Olympian



Dr Diane Adamson, Major Trauma Consultant

Major trauma consultant Dr Diane Adamson has been chosen to represent Team GB as a Para Olympian. Diane has now started training in earnest with the renowned horse trainer Pammy Hutton at the Talland School of Equitation in Cirencester.

She said: "I have always ridden but when I went through Medical School I was a single mum of two, I couldn't afford to carry on at that point – the children came first. When I finished my degree and got my first job I saved up and bought a horse.

Diane, who is based at the Royal Stoke University Hospital, now has four horses and lives at her family farm with husband Stuart, as well as three dogs. Her son, Joseph, is a Gurkha officer in Brunei, daughter Abigail is a solicitor and step-daughter Hannah is in her second year of studying psychology at university.

She said: "The horses are my best friends. Having to look after them and having a routine, particularly during the Covid pandemic has kept me well, mentally. If I have bad cases at work then I go into the stables and spend time with the horses. I find just being around them very calming."

Diane specialises in dressage as a serious accident at medical school, unrelated to riding, has made other riding styles more difficult for her. She explained: "I suffered a knee injury following a nasty fall, unrelated to riding, which caused severe nerve damage and required multiple joint reconstruction surgeries as well as a transplant and stem cell treatment. Following it, riding was increasingly difficult because I don't have a leg that works normally.

"I decided to focus on classical dressage as learning the movements means that I am much more in control

and feel much safer. I do jump my horses but not competitively. I can now compete against athletes that have similar challenges with riding. I am thrilled that I am now in a position where I can achieve my dream and compete in something I love."

Diane is also the voice of authority on all aspects of rider safety after being appointed Chief Medical Officer for the British Equestrian Training Association (BETA).

She is set to spearhead initiatives to improve the reporting of equestrian accidents, assist with BETA's safety courses for riding hat and body protector fitting and provide safety advice and guidance.

She said: "It is great that I can combine my passion for horses and riding together with my knowledge as a major trauma consultant to make a difference.

"Medics understand the potential for injury in a motor accident, but they don't always when it comes to equestrian incidents and this is something I also hope to change."

Diane also launched All the King's Horses Instagram and Facebook pages during the pandemic to help educate riders about how they should respond following an equestrian incident.



UHNM consultants recognised in Queen's Birthday Honours

Dr John Alexander, a retired consultant in paediatric intensive care at Staffordshire Children's Hospital at Royal Stoke and Dr Martin Allen, respiratory consultant have both been awarded an MBE and are among dozens of NHS staff nationally recognised for their achievements.

Dr Alexander, 64, of Loggerheads, lead a team of doctors, nurses and healthcare professionals who look after children needing intensive care at Royal Stoke and is recognised for improving the care of critically ill children and young people in the West Midlands region for nearly 25 years.



Dr Alexander

Dr Martin Allen, who has worked at Royal Stoke

University Hospital for 25 years and is also a National Specialty Adviser for NHS England, was recognised for his work during the Covid-19 pandemic. He was one of three physicians to determine the correct use of novel drugs to manage Covid-19.

The 64-year old, of Market Drayton, also wrote two national NICE guidelines for Covid-19 and co-authored

a document which reviewed how hospitals could provide good care during Covid-19.

Today Dr Allen said: "It's great to be recognised as an individual and I'm delighted but it's also fantastic for UHNM and for Stoke as an area to have a local senior clinician recognised for national work. Respiratory medicine was hit really badly during Covid but the respiratory support units helped to protect and manage care and worked innovatively. They also helped to support Intensive Care Units."



Dr Allen

In receiving his MBE, Dr Alexander said: "I feel very honoured to receive this prestigious award. I have been very fortunate to have

the support of my family as well as being able to work with outstanding teams at the hospital and across our region to develop and continue to improve how we care for children and young people, especially those needing intensive care. This award is a tribute to the amazing people I work with as well as the patients and their families I have had the privilege to care for."

Meet Keith, the pet therapy dog!

Patients in critical care were treated to a visit from a furry friend recently, when Keith the pet therapy dog came to see how they were feeling. Keith, a nine-year-old Springer Spaniel, visited with volunteer Emma.

Emma said: "Keith was a rescue dog. When I met him I could see straight away that he had a lovely temperament, so I looked into the 'pets as therapy' scheme and things went from there. He is brilliant with people and patients."

Jo Steele, critical care rehabilitation care co-ordinator, said: "Critical care is quite a sterile and intense environment, but having Keith here helps to humanise it. We cared for one patient recently who was very withdrawn but really brightened up when they engaged with Keith. Patients really benefit from their interaction with him and his visits give everyone a boost. "Keith and Emma's visits could not happen without the

support of the infection prevention team here at UHNM. Their positive approach in reviewing existing policies to enable these vital visits has been fundamental and we all really appreciate their efforts."



Paediatrician plays leading role in raising button battery awareness



Dr Anna Pigott, Consultant Paediatrician

Consultant paediatrician Dr Anna Pigott has been warning parents about the dangers of button batteries following the tragic death of a toddler who died after swallowing one.

The team at Royal Stoke fought as hard as they could to save Harper-Lee Fanthorpe but Harper sadly passed away after swallowing coin-sized batteries from a remote control.

Button batteries power everyday objects like car key fobs, remote controls, musical cards and children's toys.

The story made national news and Dr Pigott took a leading role in helping to support the family and raise awareness, including appearing on BBC Breakfast to highlight the dangers of these common household items.

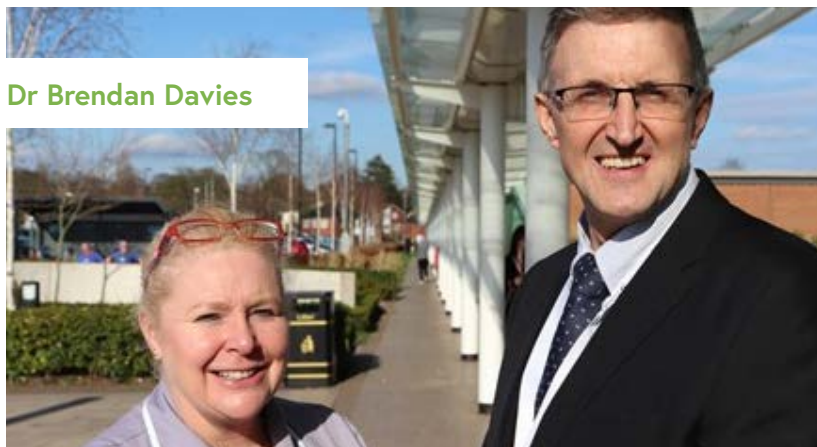
Symptoms that may indicate a child has swallowed a battery include coughing or drooling, coughing up blood as well as pointing to their throat or tummy. If you think your child has swallowed a battery take them straight to the nearest A&E department or call 999 for an ambulance.

Team helps to find genetic link for 'cluster headache'

UHNM's headache team have collaborated on a clinical study which has successfully identified a genetic link for 'cluster headache'. The condition, sometimes nicknamed 'suicide headache' or 'alarm clock headache' due to its severity, affects 1-2 per 1,000 of the UK population, with female sufferers even describing each attack as being more painful than childbirth.

Mrs Jodie Lowe, 35, from Biddulph, said: "I have suffered with cluster headaches for around eight years now but it took more than 12 months for a diagnosis from my GP. I can experience up to five attacks per day lasting up to two hours each. Prior to these I used to suffer with migraines but then it developed into cluster headaches. The pain is excruciating and I would much rather go through childbirth than have this debilitating condition.

"It really affects my day-to-day life, from taking my children to school or simply just playing with them. I have to rely on my husband and parents for help if an attack does occur. Without using oxygen or the injectable drugs to help my condition, I can become distressed and agitated with the pain, people think I am drunk or on drugs or mistake my symptoms for a stroke."



Dr Brendan Davies

Dr Brendan Davies, consultant neurologist UHNM, one of several European contributors to the study published in the journal *The Annals of Neurology*, was encouraged that the research has identified potential candidate genes which may help to explain why some people develop cluster headaches.

Dr Davies said: "We have a specific cluster headache rapid access clinic run by our headache nurse specialist to help manage this dreadful headache disorder.

"I would like to express my gratitude to all the patients with cluster headache in Staffordshire and beyond who have helped with their participation in this important preliminary genetic research as we try to unravel the important but often asked question as to why certain individuals experience this uncommon but massively impactful condition."

Pathology staff lead on biomedical science degree apprenticeship

A group of UHNM pathology staff have become some of the first in the country to achieve a degree apprenticeship in healthcare science.



Donna Simms,
Registered
Biomedical Scientist
in Histopathology

Jacob Robinson,
Biomedical
Scientist,
Microbiology

Katie Preston,
Biomedical
Scientist,
Virology

Jessica Sherwin,
Associate
Practitioner,
Biochemistry

Adrian Wilson,
Associate
Practitioner,
Biochemistry

The qualification is a new route to biomedical scientist education which integrates traditional academic learning on a degree programme with work-based learning through employment in the laboratory.

The demanding workload required students to balance academic study with family and work commitments during the pandemic.

Katie Berger, pathology quality and training manager, said: "All of our team members are outstanding and the grades they have achieved reflect the hard work and dedication they have shown throughout their studies. It has been a pleasure and privilege to see them develop over the last four years and we are all really proud of their achievements and of the biomedical scientists they can now become."



Biomedical scientist graduates



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- ✓ Relay event
- ✓ 1km & 2km junior race

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Phone : 01782 676444

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charity

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FRIDAY 17TH JUNE

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18 HOLE 4 BALL COMPETITION | BREAKFAST & DINNER INCLUDED | ENTERTAINMENT



Oral health workshops open to over 20,000 children

After a successful Keep Stoke Smiling pilot project, UHNM Charity and Stoke City Community are widening the initiative out to all primary schools in North Staffordshire.

The workshops will now be available to all children in years 2–6, with ambitions to make the county’s early years schools ‘Fizz Free’ and introduce ‘Toothbrushing Clubs’ to as many schools as possible.

Young people in Staffordshire will be given tooth brushing instruction alongside diet advice so they are empowered to make positive choices when it comes to their dental health.

Director of Communications and Charity at UHNM, Lisa Thomson said: “We are delighted to play our part in getting the young people in our region smiling and to address one of the major health inequalities, child oral health. Working in partnership with Stoke City Community Trust and schools we are able to reach thousands of children and inspire them to keep their teeth and their smile healthy.”

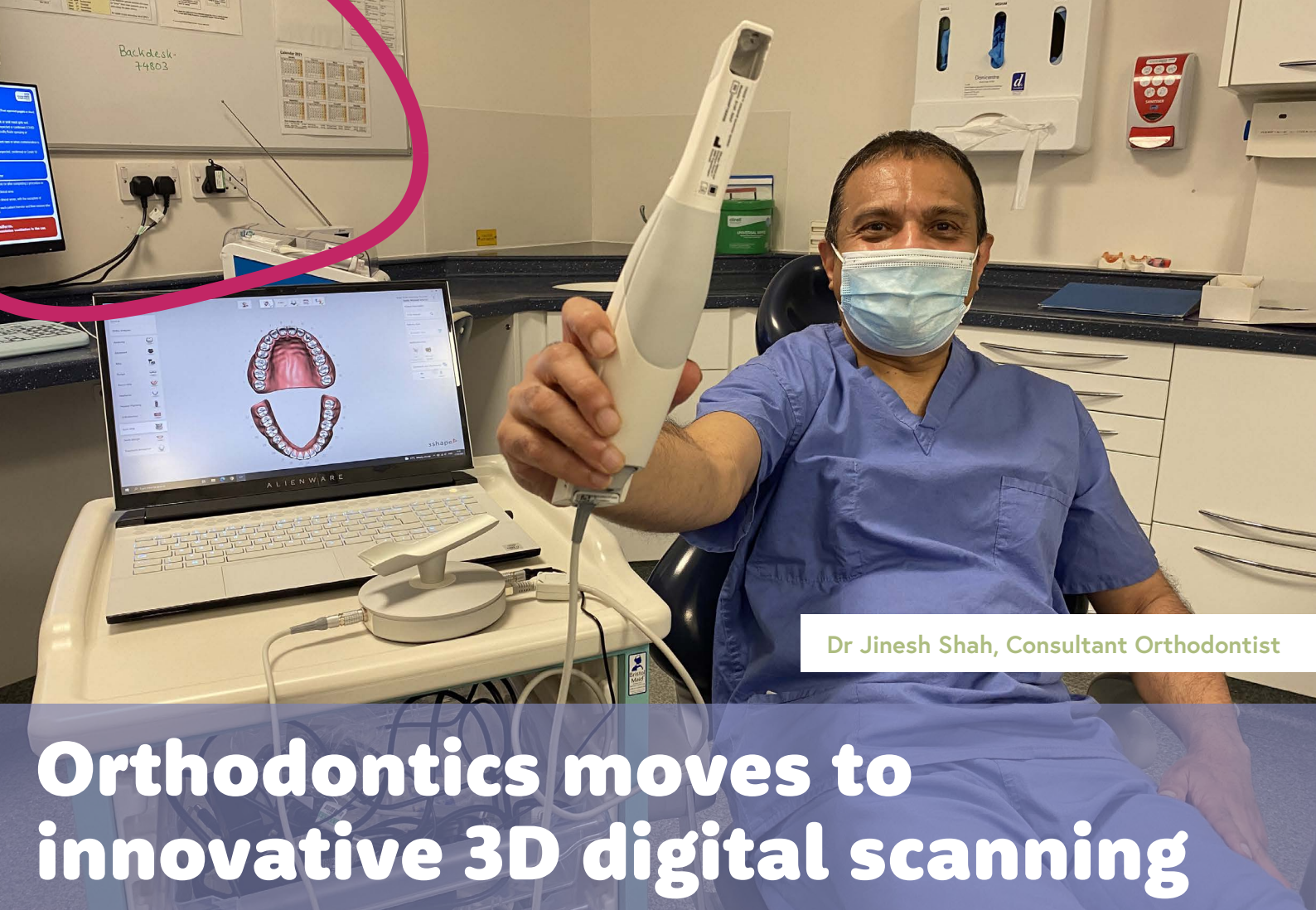
The support from Keep Stoke Smiling Founder Dr Karen Juggins, Consultant Orthodontist at Royal Stoke

University Hospital and her clinical team has allowed the project to gain credibility very quickly.

Dr Juggins said: “I am delighted to be working in partnership with Stoke City Football Club and UHNM Charity who share our vision to improve the dental of children and young adults in Staffordshire. Sadly, Stoke-on-Trent sits in the bottom quarter of the league table for decayed teeth in young children. Projects like this are essential to meet this urgent need in our community.”

The partnership sees UHNM Charity and the Stoke City Community Trust work together to deliver valuable community messages. The sessions offer a hands-on workshop tailored for junior school children. Topics include tooth brushing, checking food labels, fluoride toothpaste and showing the dangers of sugary fizzy drinks.

Adrian Hurst, Head of Community at Stoke City Football Club said: “We use a variety of the Footballs Club’s assets and interventions to help transform the lives of young people both on and off the pitch. We really enjoyed delivering the pilot KSS project and the Trust are looking forward to making the project bigger and better with the support of the UHNM Charity we will continue to provide key health education messages within our county over the next 12 months”.



Dr Jinesh Shah, Consultant Orthodontist

Orthodontics moves to innovative 3D digital scanning

Orthodontic patients at UHNM can now benefit from having faster, more accurate and less invasive impressions of their teeth taken thanks to charity funding.

UHNM Charity has helped the Trust's Orthodontic departments at Royal Stoke and County hospitals purchase two of the latest innovative 3D digital intra-oral scanners to take digital scans of the teeth and surrounding structures which will replace analogue paste impressions.

The new scanners enable consultants and clinicians to view the images of the patient's teeth and occlusion instantly which speeds up treatment decisions with patients, reducing waiting times. The scans can also be transmitted electronically to the laboratory for manufacturing appliances, reducing appointment intervals.

Jinesh Shah, Consultant Orthodontist at UHNM who led this project said: "Our new 3D digital intra-oral scanner has given a new experience to our patients, many of whom disliked having the analogue paste impressions which deterred them from having dental treatment. The new digital method of recording the relationship of teeth and occlusion is cleaner, faster, accurate and more comfortable for patients and they feel more relaxed

about having this done. The scanned image appears instantly on the screen which the patients like so they can see and understand their proposed treatment better".

"The scanners have the latest state-of-the-art software to send electronic scanned impressions of the teeth to the laboratory immediately. Once received, the manufacture of the prescribed appliance can commence straight away so reduces the fitting time. There are no distortions in the digital scan taken which makes it more accurate and therefore the appliance made should fit better in the patient's mouth. This technology has opened up many new opportunities to improve the patient care and experiences when treating complex multi-disciplinary cases with other specialties which we will be exploring".

The scanners have proved popular with patients like Emily Weavell from Newcastle-under-Lyme who was one of the first patients to have the scanner used.

Emily said: "I've been receiving my treatment at UHNM for the past two years and have had the analogue impressions taken previously. I found these to be uncomfortable and very messy. This new method with the scanner was more comfortable and faster. I was amazed to see my teeth straight away on the screen and I could understand everything explained to me about my treatment easily as I could see on the screen. I was very impressed and would recommend this to other patients."

Patient rehabilitation improved



Belinda Diamond and the ARTU Team

A Shropshire mum completed a 50k swimming challenge raising over £55,000 for UHNM Charity.

Belinda Diamond, of Whitchurch, completed a 50k swimming challenge over a number of months to raise funds for the wards who cared for her son Fraser following a road accident last year.

Staff from the Acute Rehabilitation Trauma Unit (ARTU) were on hand to show Belinda five rehabilitation chairs they were able to purchase thanks to her swim.

Belinda said: “Coming back onto the Unit was really emotional. I knew it would be because I spent such a long time here, so being on it again was big for me. Seeing the chairs that the fundraising went towards is a feeling that I can’t really explain. It’s so nice to make a contribution and give something back as Fraser was so beautifully looked after on ARTU and its nice to leave some sort of legacy.”

Rachel Miles, Advanced Occupational Therapist on ARTU said: “We’re very grateful to Belinda and it was lovely to see her again. The complexity of the injuries of those admitted to ARTU results in a large percentage

of patients being unable to change seating positions themselves. Prior to these new chairs arriving, there was less seating equipment available and staff had to limit the time patients could use them for so they could be cleaned and readied for someone else. This was a daily occurrence and impacting on staff time and patient experience and rehabilitation.

“These new highly adjustable chairs provide postural support, pressure care and improved patient comfort. They are able to tilt, recline offer lower limb support and adjust the seat depth and width. They are ideal for a multiple-user environment like ours as they have interchangeable accessories, for example with patients using hoists or other transfer aids.”

“From an Occupational Therapists perspective, these chairs optimise function and minimise disability. They improve musculoskeletal alignment, improve appropriate sitting positions which aids swallowing and digestion and optimises cardiac efficiency. There is also a cognitive benefit, with patients being able to see more of their surroundings.”

Funds raised by Belinda’s swim will also be used to improve patient care and experience on Ward 228 Neurosurgery and Critical Care.

Tracy's 268 Pennine Trek raises £3,000

Tracy, a vet from Leek, spent eight days hiking the length of the Pennines to thank UHNM's Spinal team for providing care to her mum Helena who suffers from major back problems.

Tracy would start her walks at 4am and cover up to a massive 40 miles in a day.

She said: "On the second day I thought I couldn't do it, but the thought of mum spurred me on. Overall the weather was on my side, however I did once find myself wading through rushes and reeds in the wind and rain. I'd often be walking in the dark reliant on my GPS with sheep's eyes reflecting in my torch knowing there was a hill ahead of me somewhere."

Mum Helena followed Tracy along the route by car and was there when she crossed the finish line at The Old Nags Head in Edale.

"My mum exceeded all expectations. Despite not having a clue on sat navs or maps, she did brilliantly following me all the way in the car. Highlights of the hike include Malham Cove, Cauldrons Snout and High Cup Nick.

"Everyone at UHNM has been absolutely amazing and I did this challenge to raise funds as our way of saying thank you to our amazing NHS and giving back something for all that they have done for Mum."



Families benefit from new-look neonatal facilities

The comfort of parents whose newborn babies are receiving care on the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Royal Stoke has been improved thanks to UHNM Charity funding.

Six family rooms now enable parents to stay close to their baby and support feeding.

The newly-furnished bereavement rooms will ensure staff can care for parents in a quiet and comfortable space.

Katy Edwards, Neonatal Intensive Care Sister, said: "The improvements made will benefit families during their most difficult times.

"The bereavement room project was a collaboration between myself and colleagues including Nicola Ashdown. Nicola sadly passed away and she didn't get to see it in her lifetime, but we did this in her memory and that of our families."

Summer Lazenby from Cheadle, whose son Leo received treatment on NICU after being born 12 weeks premature, said: "The family rooms meant

we could stay with Leo for the first eight nights he was on the unit. I could go and lie down and have a moment away from the clinical environment. You don't know you need this until you really need it."

Seb and Sharlene Hess and their family, friends and supporters helped to raise funds for the unit following the sad loss of their daughter Primrose.



Mum of three tackles Snowdon to raise NICU funds



Tamsin Evans-Cliffe with colleagues and friends

Together with family, friends and UHNM colleagues, Tamsin Evans-Cliffe climbed over 1,000m to raise funds to support the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Royal Stoke.

Tamsin (third left), who's from Chell and is Deputy Directorate Manager at UHNM's Heart Centre, credits the staff on the Unit for saving the lives of all three of her children.

She said: "All three of our wonderful children have received world class care and depended upon the specialist equipment in UHNM's Neonatal Unit. They were able to benefit from the specialist equipment and staff expertise available and this has undoubtedly allowed them to lead the healthy lives they have today."

Twin daughters Rosa and Philippa, aged five, both spent two and a half weeks in NICU while 18 month-old William was ventilated for a week at just four hours old as he battled sepsis.

"The care at NICU is absolutely second to none, wonderful. We don't realise how lucky we are to have it in our locality because some families have to travel further distances to Manchester or Birmingham. So this is our way as a family of giving back because all three of my children wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the Unit. As parents, we were able to utilise the family rooms, never having to leave NICU during those critical hours."

"It had to be a challenge and something out of our comfort zone to do the Unit justice and reflect how we feel about it. Our aim was to raise funds for NICU so it can continue to deliver the outstanding care and help future families who will depend upon them."

Cancer patient donates over 25K legacy

A Smallthorne man who tragically died after a short battle with cancer has donated his legacy to the hospital that cared for him.



Lee Merchant was 48 when he passed away following a diagnosis of cancer in his spine which had spread to his lungs. The father and grandfather chose to leave his residuary estate to cancer services at the Royal Stoke University Hospital.

His family made the donation to members of cancer staff from University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM) and UHNM Charity.

Lee's Dad Frank said: "Lee was very happy-go-lucky, nothing ever worried him and he never took life too seriously. He was very hard working and worked in the pottery industry most of his life. One day we had a phone call from his boss at work saying he was bringing him home as Lee had bent over and felt a crack in his back. After a couple of days rest he was soon back at work.

"However he started developing pains in his chest along with high blood pressure and was later diagnosed with cancer in his spine that had spread to his lungs. We were given the news that it was terminal and with a course of chemotherapy and radiotherapy he would survive two to three years.

Further scans showed the cancer had spread to his stomach and kidneys.

Lee had said he wanted the £25,782 left in his estate to benefit the experience of fellow cancer patients at UHNM.

Speaking about Lee's will, Frank said: "It was a very short conversation actually we had in his flat. We think he had guessed what was happening to him and he told me when I go that the staff had been brilliant with him and he wanted everything he'd got going to the cancer ward where he had his treatment."



UHNM Anaesthetist Academic Team

UHNM Charity receive £2 million from Denise Coates Foundation

We are extremely grateful for the support of the Denise Coates Foundation for funding a range of activities during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The £2 million received by UHNM Charity from the Denise Coates Foundation has made a significant difference to both the lives of our staff and our patients.

Grant funding has enabled our 12,000 committed workforce to benefit from new dedicated rest facilities and thousands of patients to have the equipment they need to communicate with their loved ones during restricted visiting. Equipment was also purchased to enable fevers in patients and staff to be detected, preventing infections from entering our hospitals and to help improve communications within the Emergency Department. Most recently the donation has enabled UHNM's anaesthetists benefit from the latest simulation training equipment essential for high quality training, using the latest techniques.

Following an additional bid made by UHNM Charity we are delighted that the Denise Coates Foundation has now agreed to support the development of our cancer services. Made up of nine different elements,

the £8.4 million investment will enable us to deliver a state-of-the-art environment, cutting-edge equipment and the latest technology. The money will be used to improve the facilities and the environment by developing sky ceilings and living windows for cancer patients. Holistic therapies, a one-stop gynaecology oncology service to support patients to live well and a digital information directory for cancer patients through touch screen information boards will all be made available.

Dr Lloyd Craker Consultant Anaesthetist said: "The Denise Coates Foundation's generosity in providing the funds for this state of the art training equipment will benefit the training of many junior anaesthetists and other healthcare staff for years to come and we thank you most sincerely for this."

For staff it will provide the latest technology to improve clinical conversations giving other hospitals better access to tertiary centre discussions. It brings free entertainment (TV and newspapers), health information whatever a patients' age, through UHNM TV and Wi-Fi for patients, relatives and staff.

Say hello to Vocera

A hands-free device which allows staff to instantly contact each other remotely is improving patient flow and care at UHNM thanks to the Denise Coates Foundation.

Funded as part of a grant to UHNM Charity to support the hospitals' response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Vocera system is worn on the front of a uniform as a badge and works by using the hospital's WiFi to give staff instant voice communication with each other.



We will be able to purchase a state-of-the-art Intuitive da Vinci Xi dual console robotic ecosystem with a dual console for training. The new robot would provide safer and more precise treatments for patients with complex brain tumours bringing better patient outcomes and the investment to support faster treatment and diagnosis for skin cancer.

Dr Kamaraj Karunanithi, Clinical Director for Oncology said: "Here at UHNM our aim is to deliver outstanding cancer care for the populations of Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and beyond, act as a training magnet for the best and brightest clinical staff and continue to develop our amazing staff in the most up-to-date techniques. The generosity of the Denise Coates Foundation will not only help us to achieve this it will benefit patients and staff for generations to come."



It is currently in use in emergency department at Royal Stoke University Hospital helping with improved patient flow, patient safety and satisfaction and will also be rolled at the emergency department in County Hospital, Stafford and the Critical Care Unit at Royal Stoke.

Using voice commands, Vocera can be used to help with tasks such as dialling a phone number, receiving a call, playing voice messages, setting reminders or messaging a group of users.

Michelle Le'Queux, Business Manager in emergency medicine, said: "Vocera has been very successful – it's allowing staff to instantly communicate with each other to provide the best patient care.

"It has removed the need to use desk phones or pagers because Vocera is immediate. If a staff member is wearing a device then they can be contacted.

"Previously, a delay of even a few minutes could lead to frustration for staff and for patients. Staff including doctors, nurses and porters can contact each other instantly either by name or role. It is very simple to use and very effective."

Free TV and Entertainment

For patients, staff and visitors!

Log into our 'NHS WiFi' then using your camera, hover over this QR code to take you to our TV and Entertainment menu



Patients and staff at Staffordshire's two largest hospitals are able to access a range of free media services thanks to charity funding.

UHNM Charity is offering a package of its SPARK entertainment platform across UHNM at no cost to users.

It means that anyone who works at or has to stay in Royal Stoke or County Hospital, Stafford, with access to a smartphone or tablet will be able to watch 35 television channels, browse digital newspapers and magazines, listen to radio and play games.

Using free Wi-Fi, they will also be able to connect to online UHNM Charity sites and view in-house content which is hoped will encourage donations towards the charity's work.

Lisa Thomson, Director of Communications and Charity at said: "Thanks to our incredible supporters we're delighted that this exciting service is now available for our patients and staff. We know that being in hospital is tough time for many patients, so we want to do something that will help keep them entertained whilst in our care and for them to be able to access information that might be useful to them even after they are discharged."

"With visiting still limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we hope that keeping people occupied will help improve their comfort and experience and they will also be able to use our free WiFi to contact family and friends so that might make things a little easier."



The service is provided by wireless solution provider Wifi SPARK.

Steve Rushton, UHNM Charity Manager added: "It's thanks to UHNM Charity funding that UHNM was the first hospital Trust to make free Wi-Fi available for patients and staff. We have developed this platform to enable our patients to access more entertainment on their own device at no cost at all. This new service is also of great benefit to our staff who are able to enjoy well-earned free entertainment whilst on their breaks." Anybody wishing to access the service should select 'NHS Wi-Fi' on their device and log in using on-screen prompts.

UHNM wins gold award thanks to volunteer Rachel

UHNM Charity is proud to announce that UHNM has won gold in the inaugural My Improvement Network RITA Awards.

RITA, which stands for Reminiscence Interactive Therapy Activities, are a state-of-the-art digital therapy systems which allow patients to use apps and games, watch movies, listen to music and view messages from family members as part of their hospital recovery.



Rachel Willett

The award in the category of 'Best use of RITA in End of Life', is in recognition of the care given by volunteer Rachel Willett who used the system whilst in a clinical placement at Royal Stoke.

Rachel said: "Having normally worked in admin, I felt volunteering clinically during the first wave of Covid was a great opportunity to

do something I'd always wanted to do. I was stationed on Ward 222 and it was whilst I was on there that the lady I was caring for was sadly told her care was now palliative. Having just received such devastating news, I sat with her until her family were able to arrive, having assured them I wasn't going to leave her side."

"She was understandably very anxious and worried at the outcome, but using the RITA system to play games and use the entertainment I was able to take her mind off things and even have a laugh with her- we even discovered a mutual interest in rap music! Other members of staff were soon joining in our conversation."

Rachel has since enrolled at Keele University studying to become a nurse.

She was presented with her award by Tracy Bullock, Chief Executive, Ann-Marie Riley, Chief Nurse and Rebecca Ferneyhough, Quality Improvement Facilitator who nominated her for the award with My Improvement Network, the makers of RITA.

The RITA systems at UHNM were funded by UHNM Charity.

'Home from home' room launched at County Hospital



Deputy Chief Nurse Scott Malton and David Trigg and his wife

Patients and families can now benefit from a new 'home from home' while in hospital thanks to the collective efforts of the UHNM chaplaincy team and UHNM Charity.

The newly-furnished room will ensure patients and their families can spend time together in a quiet and comfortable space. Its homely feel provides a safe and relaxing space for patients living with dementia or learning disabilities outside of a clinical setting.

The room was officially opened by deputy chief nurse Scott Purser and David Trigg from Trigg engraving, who kindly donated a plaque for the room after experiencing the effects of dementia first-hand.

David said: "I experienced dementia after losing my mum and dad in the last 18 months and I'm sure we have all been affected by this cruel disease at some point in our lives. This room is a credit to County Hospital."

The room was specifically designed with dementia patients in mind as its homely feel helps patients with the transition of returning home after a hospital stay.





Welcome from Lisa Thomson, Director of Communications and UHNM Charity



Over the past few months our UHNM Charity team, which serves both County Hospital and Royal Stoke University Hospital, has been able to get out and about more. We have been able to support celebrations of the work everyone is doing to raise money both in our hospitals and in our communities. We have also been able to fund some very big projects which improve the experience for both our patients and our staff. One of these has provided free access to TV and entertainment which means that anyone on our hospital sites can use their own device to watch or listen to their favourite programmes. As part of delivering the free UHNM TV patient entertainment system we launched our 'Christmas is for Everyone' campaign and we were thrilled to receive and deliver donations from local businesses and people in a bid to help those in need across Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent.

Our work with Keep Stoke Smiling has been nothing short of amazing. Led by Dr Karen Juggins, Consultant Orthodontist at UHNM in partnership with Stoke City Community Trust (part of Stoke City Football Club) we have seen more schools across Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent sign-up to take part and become fizz free, tackling the important issue of oral health in children.

We were especially proud that Karen was awarded the annual winner of the Charity Award in the UHNM staff awards ceremony for her work to raise the profile of our charity and tackle one of the regions health inequalities. Karen's and the team's work is continuing as they plan to take the important message of oral hygiene into more schools.

To the local companies, organisations, members of staff and individuals who have donated money, their time and everything from chocolates and food hampers to homemade scrubs and face cream, a huge thank you. Your support and help is greatly appreciated, it brings smiles and happiness during very difficult times.

We rely on all of our supporters, who are continuing to grow in numbers. There are many reasons why you may have chosen to give to us. Some people choose to remember us in their will and some choose to leave us a donation in the memory of a loved one. Others choose to hold events, run marathons and even climb mountains! Whatever you choose to do, 100 percent of the money you raise goes to providing services that are above and beyond what the NHS alone can provide, touching lives and making a huge difference to the people in our care. We want to encourage more people to get involved and join many of our UHNM staff in fundraising. In this edition of our magazine we feature just a small sample of what some of our supporters have been doing, along with how this is making a real difference to our patients and staff. I hope you enjoy reading it and above all I hope it encourages you to get involved!



Leave a legacy to UHNM Charity

After providing for your loved ones, leaving a gift in your will to UHNM Charity is a wonderful way to support a cause you care about and can help transform the care and experience for hundreds or even thousands of local patients for years to come. Whatever the size of your gift, you can help to provide extra state-of-the-art equipment, new facilities, pioneering research and all the extras that make our care so special.

Whatever your reasons for supporting UHNM Charity, by including a gift in your will you're helping us to go above and beyond what the NHS can provide. We work hand-in-hand with doctors, nurses and other medical experts from UHNM to ensure that every gift bequeathed to the Charity is put to good use - making the greatest possible difference to patient care.

Whichever ward or service is close to your heart, we want you to know that we will hold your donation in a charitable fund that supports the area of your choice, or if you'd prefer to leave a gift for general charitable purposes we will ensure that it is spent where it is needed the most.

We are truly grateful to all those who consider leaving a gift to UHNM Charity in their will.

We appreciate this can be a difficult subject to broach, but if you would like to discuss how your legacy could have an impact on local patients or any wishes for how the money is spent please get in touch with one of our friendly team on 01782 676444.

You can make a donation to UHNM Charity by:



Calling 01782 676444



Visit uhnmcharity.org.uk



or sending a cheque to UHNM Charity, Royal Stoke University Hospital, Newcastle Road, Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire, ST4 6QG



U·H·N·M charity

Raising funds for University Hospitals of North Midlands



Making a difference for our patients