

# THE Pulse

Issue 107  
June 2023



## In this edition:

Spotlight on Dementia Support  
and our Dementia Fayre  
Celebrating NHS 75  
Our Virtual Ward expands

**NHS 75**

**Norfolk and Norwich  
University Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust



## Food and drink

**Feast@:** West Atrium, Level 1, open daily 7am - 1am

**Feast@ the Deli:** West Atrium, Level 1, open Monday - Friday, 7am-3pm

**Feast@ Café Bar:** Out-patients East, open Monday - Friday, 7.30am - 4.30pm

**Coffee House:** Plaza (West), open Monday - Friday, 7am - 6.30pm; Saturday, 9am - 4.30pm; Sunday, 9am - 3.30pm

**Little Costa:** Out-patients West, open Monday - Friday, 7am - 5.30pm

**The Pod:** Plaza East, open Monday - Friday, 7am - 8pm; Saturday, 9am - 6pm

**Charity Café:** Car park G outside the Emergency Department, 7.30am - 4pm weekdays

**The Mardle Café at Cromer Hospital:** 8am - 4pm Monday to Friday

## Shopping

**WRVS:** East Atrium, open Monday - Friday, 8am - 8pm; weekends, 10am - 6pm

**WH Smith, M&S Food:** Plaza (West), open Monday - Friday, 7am - 7pm; Saturday, 9am - 5pm; Sunday, 9am - 4pm

**The Stock Shop:** West Atrium, Level 2, open Monday - Friday, 9am - 5.30pm; Saturday, 12pm - 4pm

## Services

**Cash machines:** East Atrium, Level 2, WHSmith and the main restaurant

**Lost property:** Call 01603 286803 or ext 2803

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):** For confidential help and advice call 01603 289036

**Chapel:** Open to all. For details of services or to contact the Chaplains call 01603 287470 Cromer Hospital, call 01603 646200

**Hospital Radio Norwich:** To request a song or a bedside visit, call 01603 454585 or from your Hospedia bedside unit dial \*800

## Contact us

**The Pulse Editorial team:** call 01603 289821 or ext. 5821, email [Communications@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:Communications@nnuh.nhs.uk)

**Design:** Medical Illustration

The Pulse is funded entirely from charitable donations: N&N Hospitals Charity, registered charity number 1048170

**Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital**  
Colney Lane, Norwich, Norfolk, NR4 7UY

**Tel:** 01603 286286; **Website:** [nnuh.nhs.uk](http://nnuh.nhs.uk)

**Cromer and District Hospital, Mill Road, Cromer, NR27 0BQ**

**Tel:** 01263 513571

**Please note that all opening times are currently subject to change.**



## Letters and social media

@NNUH



On arrival at A&E I was cared for and treated by several doctors and nurses and sent for scans. My very worried family says that all were extremely kind at what was a very worrying time. I was then admitted to Easton Ward and then Gissing Ward where all the staff treated me and my family very well. The porters and catering staff were also wonderful. Every member of your fantastic team deserves the utmost credit and I cannot thank them enough.

**SW**

I cannot praise enough the staff who have looked after me on the Acute Medical Units and made me fit to come home. My admiration for them is boundless. I know you are very short staffed, but no-one said anything about that to me. If anyone moans to me about the NHS at the NNUH I will tell them in no uncertain terms about how I was cared for.

**BC**

I would just like to commend all the staff, especially on the wards and unit for the kind, friendly care given to me. The food was hot and tasty and very varied, sandwiches and hot drinks readily available. In my opinion the Angio setup gave exemplary care and they made sure that every step was explained until understood.

**MJ**

Your staff were friendly, helpful, caring and professional during my treatment for prostate cancer. In particular, Dr Jenny Nobes, Sam Worster, radiologist Nicky and the nursing staff – Sue Cookesley, Josh Buggs and Cath Taylor. We have a great NHS and you have a terrific bunch of people.

**RL**



@NNUH @NHSOrganDonor  
We were joined by 180 people at our Norfolk and Norwich Organ Donation Study Day. Guests included Sina Patel, HM Coroner Mrs Lake, Mr Dominic Summers, Ahmed Al-Adhami, Paul Lincoln and 12 yr old Lucy and her Mum Charlotte sharing Andy's donation story.

## Eastern Organ Donation Team

Everybody who treated my sister, Doctors, Nurses, Radiography girls and Receptionists were so kind and considerate to her (and me) that it made a potentially difficult experience into a pleasant one. The outcome happily was positive too.

**HH**

From the minute we arrived at A&E the care and treatment was exceptional. They were extremely busy with patients pouring in, however, the triage doctor and receptionist responded very quickly so that my husband was seen immediately as they suspected fractures in the spinal column. I would like to mention the triage doctor, the receptionist, the admitting doctor and the two nurses who looked after my husband.

**BE**

Thank you @NNUH ED for taking care of my uni boy's broken wrist yesterday of all days. Excellent service apparently and great to know he's in safe hands when he's 100 miles away from his worried mum.

**SC**





As we mark the 75th anniversary of the NHS this summer, it causes us to pause and reflect on changes and developments and to look at what lies ahead for our future.

Last April, we published a five-year plan which set out our vision for how we will transform our services, improve care for our patients, deliver improvements alongside our partners and ensure that NNUH is a great place to work.

In the last 12 months alone, our amazing teams have embarked upon new ground-breaking surgery techniques, put out-patient follow-ups in the hands of our patients through a new digital platform and we're now playing a vital role in the delivery of genomic testing across the East to tailor treatments for patients according to their genetic makeup.

Research is a crucially important part of our five-year plan. It's fundamental to us as a teaching Trust, helping us to improve the care and treatment for our patients, and it was a pleasure to join the research team to celebrate International Clinical Trials Day in May.

Take a look at pages 10 and 11 to see some examples of our fascinating research projects in different areas including maternity services, gastroenterology and a partnership research project we worked on with the University of East Anglia which shows that being vaccinated against Covid halves people's risk of developing long Covid.

We all know the importance of research to us and its potential life-improving and life-saving discoveries. For example, recent news stories have covered an international research trial and a national research trial in the UK, which talked about the possibility of entering a new era of Alzheimer's treatments, after the second drug in under a year has been shown to slow the disease. Many of us will be watching the outcomes of this and any further research on dementia and if any treatments become available in the future, with a great deal of interest. Looking at our own research strategy, we will be building on the sustained progress we have already made, focusing on our key research priorities for this year including developing our work on vaccines and deepening our partnership with the Quadram around the microbiome.

Finally, a big thank you to our Dementia Support Team who organised a great event for our community during Dementia Action Week in May. We were delighted to bring back the Dementia Fayre to the hospital for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic and you can read about the event on page 6.

**Sam Higginson, Chief Executive, NNUH**





## NICU dads complete epic trek to raise thousands

**Two dads have completed a gruelling 190-mile challenge, raising thousands of pounds for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit where their babies spent their first days.**

Matt Dyke and Martin Church, pictured right, braved howling wind, torrential rain, blisters and muscle strains in an epic trek from Cumbria to Yorkshire in just five days.

So far, they have raised more than £8,500 for the N&N Hospitals Charity neonatal intensive care fund.

The NICU unit is close to the hearts of both men – Martin's first child, Charlie, arrived eight weeks early in 2018, then his second, Mabel, was 14 weeks premature in December 2021, while Matt's daughter Rosa was five weeks premature in 2014 and all three were treated on the unit.

Their route took them through the Lake District, over the Pennines and across the North York Moors ascending a total height twice as high as Mount Everest's base camp to the summit.

Martin, from Horsford, said after reaching the end: **"The highlights were some stunning scenery, especially in the Lake District which was full of lambs, and the team camaraderie. The lowlights were a knee injury which meant I let Matt go on at his own pace, and the tough terrain which was bleak at times."**



Matt added: **"It was much harder than we imagined. Even the flatter bits, where we thought we would make up time were tricky – boggy, slippery and you were having to jump over or walk around obstructions, mud and water."**

**"Our bodies are battered, bruised, blistered and swollen but we're completely overwhelmed by the support, words of encouragement and donations received."**

Both men paid tribute to their support team – driver Colm McGilway and sports therapists Sally Ling and Lisa Payne from Up and Running Treatments plus various friends and guests who joined them for stretches of the walk to boost sometimes flagging morale. They also thanked Stebbings Car Superstore at King's Lynn for donating a crew van and tank of fuel.

## Mountain charity challenge for research team

**An intrepid team of fundraisers are aiming high in a charity challenge to support the research and development at our Trust.**

The team of ten, who all work at the Quadram Institute, will travel to Wales in June to prepare to climb the 1,085 metre (3,560 feet) Snowdon the following day.

They will be climbing The Llanberis Path, a distance of nine miles and hope to reach the summit and come back down in between six to eight hours.

Becky Woodcock, Research Study Administrator, and one of the climbers said: **"We wanted to do something for charity and the N&N Hospitals Charity was one that we could all relate to. None of us are exceptionally fit, nor are we experienced hikers/climbers so it will certainly be a challenge to say the least."**

The Quadram Institute, on the Norwich Research Park, is a state-of-the-art facility for bioscience and clinical research and home to the NNUH Endoscopy Centre and NNUH-run Clinical Research Facility.

**If you would like to support Becky and the team, which will benefit research at the N&N, you can support them here: [www.justgiving.com/page/climbingmountsnowdon](http://www.justgiving.com/page/climbingmountsnowdon)**

**N&N**

**Norfolk & Norwich  
Hospitals Charity**





## Charity grant support for pancreatitis research

**Research into acute pancreatitis and its causes, supported by a grant from the N&N Hospitals Charity, has received top accolades.**

The £7,200 grant was used to purchase access to the UK Biobank which is an opt-in resource containing medical data for 500,000 people across the UK.

The research was undertaken as part of Wing Kiu Chou's degree of Masters of Research at the UEA in collaboration with Stephen Lam from the UEA, the National Institute for Health and Care Research and NNUH.

The data gave access to the medical information of 3,969 patients with pancreatitis - inflammation of the pancreas - and research conducted using this data found associations between existing medical conditions and severe pancreatitis, and two genetic mutations that could be indicators of severe disease.

Several further research opportunities have been highlighted as a result of the findings.

Wing said: **"Pancreatitis affects 56 out of 100,000 people each year. Gallstone disease and alcohol are the most common risks factors and symptoms can be mild, but one in four people will develop a severe form of the disease, which often requires critical care admission and long hospital stays.**

**"Despite intensive support, many people develop irreversible organ failure, life-threatening lung infections, and almost half of such patients will not survive. Little is known about what causes severe acute pancreatitis and treatment in hospital has largely been unchanged for over half a century."**

The grant was approved to fund access to the Biobank data which includes blood tests, surgical information and, important to this study, genetic information.

The research received the Wolfson Foundation Award from the Royal College of Physicians and the Wolfson Foundation, the International Poster Prize at the International Conference of the Korean Pancreatobiliary Association was awarded.

And an oral presentation of the research was selected as Best Pancreas Oral Presentation at this year's British Society of Gastroenterology conference.

NNUH Oesophagogastric cancer lead and senior author Bhaskar Kumar said:

**"I am delighted with this collaborative research which has revealed novel findings about acute pancreatitis. I am very grateful to the support given to us by generous donation by the charity. I hope this is the start of further collaborations between UEA, Norwich medical school and NNUH helping to develop research themes based on clinical problems which ultimately will help the patients and families we serve."**

If you would like to support the N&N Hospitals Charity in funding further research at NNUH please make a donation at: [www.justgiving.com/campaign/NorfolkResearch](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/NorfolkResearch) send a cheque payable to N&N Hospitals Charity Research or scan this QR code



*Wing Kiu Chou, Stephen Lam, Bhaskar Kumar and patient James Moore who supported the research via a pancreatitis support group which he leads.*

**N&N**

Norfolk & Norwich  
Hospitals Charity



## Brewing up for NHS 75

Hosting an NHS Big Tea is a great way to bring people together around a shared love of the NHS whilst raising money to support NHS staff, volunteers and patients.

You can brew up a storm on 5 July, the 75th birthday of the NHS, so grab your teapot, pop the kettle on and let's turn tea and cake into cash. Every cuppa makes a difference.

Visit [www.nhsbigtea.co.uk](http://www.nhsbigtea.co.uk) to find out more.

Please remember to select Norfolk and Norwich Hospitals Charity to fundraise for.





## New procedure for common urinary condition

**A new procedure to help hundreds of men affected by a common urinary condition has been carried out by NNUH urology consultants.**

The urethra is the tube which carries urine away from the body and in men of all ages, Urethral Stricture Disease, or scarring of the urethral tract, causes narrowing of the tube, making it difficult to urinate.

Previously men with this condition could either widen the tube themselves with a procedure called self-dilatation, which required them to insert a single-use catheter to widen the tube. Many find this difficult to do themselves and usually opt for corrective surgery.



Now patients at NNUH who qualify can have an operation called Optilume Drug-Coated Balloon procedure during which the Optilume Drug Coated Balloon dilates the scarred urethra whilst pushing a disease-modifying drug into the affected area.

Optilume DCB has been around for about three years and NNUH Consultant Urologist Ruth Doherty has spent that time building a case to bring it to patients in Norfolk and Waveney.

She said: **"This is a very common condition in men and treating it can be difficult because it is painful and uncomfortable for them. The Optilume has a lower risk of failure and means that fewer patients will need reconstructive surgery or need to perform self-dilatation. Patients are still offered all options upfront, so it greatly improves patient choice. It is great to have a minimally invasive day-case procedure available."**

**"It is a much quicker procedure too, taking only about 15 minutes, so we believe this will free up capacity in theatre for those who need more complex surgery. And there is a sustainability benefit because the catheters are single-use so we are reducing our waste as well."**

The hospital has enrolled in a worldwide study which will investigate the longer-term effects of the procedure over five years. Fellow NNUH Consultant Urology Surgeon Asheesh Kaul is the study co-investigator.

## Run, jog or walk for the NHS at Parkrun

**NHS staff and volunteers, as well as local communities, will be encouraged to 'parkrun for the NHS' at events on Saturday 8 July or junior parkrun events on Sunday 9 July.**

It is an opportunity for parkruns and their local communities to acknowledge the huge contribution that the NHS makes to the health of the nation and celebrate all the staff and volunteers, past and present, who have made the NHS what it is.

Parkrun takes place at 9am every Saturday and is a 5k run, jog or walk for participants.

The nearest is Colney Lane parkrun, which starts at the UEA sports pavilion and NHS staff will be volunteering, running and marshallng on the day.

**For more information, visit:**  
**[www.parkrun.org.uk/](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/)**





# NNUH Dementia Fayre returns

**A wealth of dementia information and support was available to patients, carers, members of the public and healthcare workers when our Dementia Fayre returned to the hospital.**

For the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic, we hosted the free event in person in the East Atrium and Benjamin Gooch Lecture Theatre on Monday 15 May, including an insight into Virtual Reality dementia education and advances in dementia diagnosis.

Our Dementia Support Team was joined by partners including Norfolk and Waveney Dementia Support Service, Norfolk Adult Social Services, Age UK Norfolk, NIHR Join Dementia Research, Age UK Norwich, Carers Voice and local dementia support groups.

Liz Yaxley, NNUH Dementia Services Manager, said: **"It was the first time we could hold the event in person since the pandemic and we were thrilled to see so many patients, visitors and healthcare professionals attend. We also had fascinating talks on dementia diagnosis, what it's like to live with young onset dementia and how virtual reality is being used in education."**

**"It was fantastic to see so many people back in the hospital for the Dementia Fayre. We've already had great feedback from guests who found the information and talks really helpful. The piano music, song and cake gave the event a real buzz too. This event is so important. It gives people information and support and is a place to ask questions and learn about what it's like living with dementia."**

Talks included an open conversation with Dirck Geary, a former patient who is living with young onset Dementia.

Dr Michael Hornberger, Professor of Applied Dementia Research, from the UEA, spoke about upcoming techniques to transform dementia diagnosis and Dr Jordan Tsigarides spoke about how we are using virtual reality to support Dementia Education.

**For more information on the work of the NNUH Dementia Support Team, visit: [www.nnuh.nhs.uk/news/spotlight-on-dementia-support-team/](http://www.nnuh.nhs.uk/news/spotlight-on-dementia-support-team/) or scan this QR code**



## We'd like to hear your views on the Pulse Magazine

**We always aim to make the Pulse as informative and interesting as possible.**

To help us keep improving, we're running an online survey for a few weeks to hear what you think – are there changes you would like to see or different types of story that you'd like us to cover?

The short survey includes questions from what you think of the layout, design and photography, whether you prefer to read our magazine in print or online, to what you like most about our magazine and any suggestions or feedback (good or bad) about the Pulse that you might like to share with us.

**You can take the online survey through this QR code:**



**Or you can write to us at the following Freepost address with your feedback:**

Communications office  
Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust,  
FREEPOST Plus RRJT-ERAK-YEKZ, Colney Lane, Norwich NR4 7UY



**The survey will be open until 14 August. We'll report back a summary of your feedback in the next edition of the Pulse.**



## Event to mark Experience of Care Week

**Our Patient Experience and Engagement team held an event during Experience of Care week to highlight the work going on to involve patients with making improvements across the Trust.**

Experience of Care week is an international initiative celebrating the work happening across health and social care to improve the experiences of care for patients, families, carers and staff.

The event included talks from the Complex Health Hub, and about the wide range of volunteering roles, and young people transitioning from Children's to Adult services. There were also information stands from groups including Caring Together and Carers Voice. Patients and carers were also able to find out more about future opportunities to get involved, for example through the



Rosie Bloomfield and Jody Ling from the Patient Experience Team

Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment (PLACE) Programme and a new group to champion the voices of those with a military connection.

Sarah Higson, Associate Director for Patient Experience and Engagement, said:

**"There is so much going on to help improve the experience of our patients and carers, but we know we can do more. There are lots of things in the pipeline such as starting a Youth Patient group so that we can hear from some of our younger patients. Events like these help us to find out what really matters to our patients and their families."**

Su Allport's dad was a patient in the summer of 2022. He had dementia and macular degeneration and was also deaf.

Su attended the event and gave her feedback about her experience. Due to Covid restrictions at the time, Su couldn't be with her dad as much as she would have liked. She also thinks there could be improvements made to communication for carers, as well as public transport options to the hospital. She said: **"I wanted to give my honest feedback because I want to make a difference. I'd like to see more done to allow carers or relatives to be with their loved one at any time, if they don't have a voice. My dad sadly passed away after his stay in hospital. I can't help him anymore, but I hope that by sharing my thoughts, I can make a difference to another person and their loved ones."**

If you would like to discuss getting involved, email [patient.experience@nnuh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.experience@nnuh.nhs.uk) or you can find them on Twitter @PatientExp\_NNUH.



Nancy Fontaine speaking at the event

## Carer Friendly Tick Award

**Caring Together has once again recognised our efforts to support carers by awarding us the Carer Friendly Tick Award (Health) accreditation.**

We have been praised for the way we engage with both young and adult carers as well as for quality of information about support available to them and the number of events and conferences we organised in the last two years.

**"This award does give adult and young carers assurance that our teams have continued to build on the engagement and the co-design of processes with carers, demonstrating we truly listen and work on the improvements together,"** said Prof Nancy Fontaine, Chief Nurse.

**"We could not have progressed this far without our cadre of carers working as our critical friends and we value all of their feedback and their time, which has been exceptional in providing the right direction for the organisation."**

**"We are very grateful for their input and will continue to work in harmony with all carers to improve the experience of care."**



Claire Rogers, Carer awareness and voice coordinator at Caring Together presented the award to Chief Nurse Nancy Fontaine



## More patients set to recover at home under our Virtual Ward

**Our Virtual Ward, which launched in February 2021, is an innovative way of providing care for patients whilst they recover at home.**

The initial focus was for patients recovering from Covid-19, but it has quickly expanded. Over the last two years more than 2,250 patients from across the hospital in 21 specialties have used the ward. This has freed up more than 18,000 bed days.

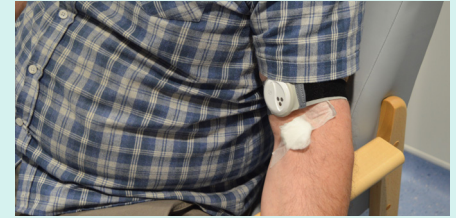
We are the largest provider of Virtual Ward beds in Norfolk and Waveney, and we have been given funding to increase the number of beds in our Virtual Ward from 40 to 60.

Our Virtual Ward has established a clinical team to mirror a normal ward and provides 24/7 care for all patients, 365 days a year.

As a result, other hospitals continue to visit us and model their own Virtual Wards on ours.

On the Virtual Ward, patients can recover in the comfort of their own homes whilst receiving remote monitoring. They are given a wearable device which provides the clinical team visibility of a patient's current observations including blood pressure, pulse and oxygen levels. Patients still receive support daily or more frequently if needed, over the phone or via a video call.

Face-to-face care from multi-disciplinary teams can also be provided depending on the patient's needs.



**49-year-old Sam Weller from Sprowston has an autoimmune liver condition which causes infections and over the last two years he has been admitted to hospital and then moved onto the Virtual Ward five times.**

Sam said: **"I'm really pleased with the Virtual Ward because it's a way of coming home and seeing my children and partner. Before, I had to stay in hospital until I finished all my antibiotics, but since the Virtual Ward has been introduced it's meant they can send me home to complete the course at home. Plus, it frees up the bed so that it's available for someone else."**

Sam was sent home with a tablet, blood pressure cuff, wearable device (similar to a smart watch), and a communication hub that needs to be plugged in and connected to wifi or use mobile data.

Sam added: **"The tablet has reminders on it to tell me when to take a blood pressure reading. It also asks you to fill in a survey each morning which is sent back to the ward staff. It's also got a great chat function, so if you've got a problem you can contact them straight away. They always call once or twice a day too to check on you and they see your survey answers which are very good at highlighting if there are any problems."**

Due to Sam's condition and the regular treatment, he has been fitted with a picc line and trained by nursing staff on the Aylsham Medical Day Unit (AMDU) in how to make up his drip so that he can have IV antibiotics at home.

**"AMDU have been brilliant. I don't think it would have worked without their backing, and the support of the Specialist Liver Nurses."**

**"I'm thankful the Virtual Ward is in place now, it's just better for the whole family if I can be at home,"** he said.

Claire Beard, Virtual Ward Manager, said: **"Virtual Wards are going to be the future of health care. It's great that we're able to expand our service because the bigger bed base we have, the more patients we can help and the more beds we can free up in the hospital. That then means there's better flow through the hospital and ambulances can handover patients more quickly. It's really win-win for everyone."**

Feedback from patients has been extremely positive with over 98% saying they were very satisfied with the Virtual Ward.



*Sam Weller, Virtual Ward patient*



## NNUH joins two studies to help children with inflammatory bowel disease

**Two new studies have been launched to help further enhance clinical understanding of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) amongst children and young people.**

More than 100 children and 3,000 adults are currently under the care of the hospital for IBD and three to four new cases a month are being diagnosed by the paediatric gastroenterology team. IBD covers conditions such as ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, which can be debilitating for children and young adults as well as affecting their mental health and wellbeing.

The Paediatric Gastroenterology team and Children's and Women's Research team at NNUH have joined the TRIPP Research Protocol (Translational Research in Intestinal Physiology and Pathology) in Cambridge, which is supported by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR).

The study involves collecting blood samples and intestinal biopsies to understand the genetic signatures that can cause IBD. Mini-gut models can also be grown from stem cells to further understanding of the mechanisms involved in IBD and to test specific treatments.

The Paediatric Gastroenterology Team and the Children's and Women's Research team at NNUH have also joined the Paediatric Inflammatory Bowel Disease (PIBD) BioResource Network, a large UK biobank collecting blood and biopsy samples from children with IBD that aims to gain further insight into the complex mechanisms underlying this chronic condition. This is funded by NIHR and the UK IBD Genetics Consortium.



*The Paediatric Gastroenterology Team and the Children's and Women's Research Team at NNUH Sue Underhill-Smith, Marco Gasparetto, Emily Tropman, Julie Cook and Sara Callam*

Dr Marco Gasparetto, Consultant Paediatric Gastroenterologist, said: **"These are exciting times for high quality large research collaborations in support of our young patients with IBD and their families, and we are delighted to see both paediatric and adult gastroenterology at NNUH on the frontline."**

**"Inflammatory bowel disease is a complex, multi-factorial, immune-mediated condition that is affecting increasing numbers of adults and children worldwide. While a single mechanism underlying the disease has not been identified and therefore a definite cure is not available, research endeavours in the past years have made remarkable progress identifying some of the pathways involved. This has led to new treatment developments for the patients affected by this long-lasting condition."**

**"There is increasing evidence on the role of environmental factors and their interplay with a genetic predisposition in triggering IBD and there is lots of research ongoing, but no IBD-specific triggers identified yet."**

## Vaccination halves risk of long Covid, UEA and NNUH study shows

**Being vaccinated against Covid halves people's risk of developing long Covid, according to new research from the University of East Anglia and our Trust.**

Long Covid affects around two million people in the UK, and new research, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, reveals the risk factors associated with developing the condition. Overweight people, women, smokers and those over the age of 40 are also more likely to suffer from long Covid according to the study - which includes more than 860,000 patients and is thought to be the largest of its kind.

The study also found that co-morbidities such as asthma, COPD, Type 2 Diabetes, coronary heart disease, immunosuppression, anxiety and depression are also associated with increased risk of long Covid. The team looked at data from 41 studies around the world, involving a total of 860,783 patients, to investigate the risk factors for developing long Covid.

Prof Vassilios Vassiliou, from UEA's Norwich Medical School and Honorary Consultant Cardiologist at NNUH, said: **"It was reassuring to see that people who had been vaccinated had significantly less risk - almost half the risk - of developing Long Covid compared to unvaccinated participants."**





# Extra pregnancy scan significantly reduces the number of unplanned breech births

**Adding a third routine scan at the end of pregnancy can reduce the number of unexpected breech births by 70%, according to new research from our maternity team at NNUH and St George's, University of London.**

Researchers hope that findings published in PLOS Medicine will lead to a change in national guidelines, so all pregnant women are offered a scan in their third trimester to improve maternity care.

Currently, pregnant women have routine scans at 12 and 20 weeks only, with extra scans only offered for recognised complicated pregnancies. However, around 4% of babies are unexpectedly in a breech position at the end of pregnancy, where the baby is positioned feet or bottom first, which puts them at increased risk of being admitted to a neonatal unit, brain injury due to a lack of oxygen, or even death.

Our maternity team were the first in the country in 2016 to introduce a policy of midwives carrying out a third trimester scan, with handheld scanners funded by the N&N Hospitals Charity.

The research compared 5,119 women who received standard ultrasound scans at NNUH and 4,575 who were given a 'point-of-care' ultrasound scan at 36 weeks using a handheld, portable device.



At St George's University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (SGUH), doctors analysed 16,777 cases against 7,351 who had an extra ultrasound scan by a sonographer at 36 weeks.

Both types of third trimester ultrasound scan dramatically reduced the rate of unexpected breech births – 71% lower with the standard type of ultrasound at SGUH and 69% lower with the hand-held portable device at NNUH. The babies of women who had the third ultrasound were 16% less likely to be admitted to the neonatal unit for closer monitoring and mothers were also less likely to need an emergency caesarean.

Fran Harlow, Consultant Obstetrician for the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and Maternal Medicine Lead for the Norwich Regional Maternal Medicine Centre, said:



*Sam Knights, Fran Harlow and Pam Sizer  
from the NNUH maternity team*

**"We are delighted to have played our part in this significant research, which was driven by our community midwifery team at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. This paper demonstrates the huge impact and improvement in patient care by carrying out an additional scan in the third trimester. At NNUH all our midwives have been trained to routinely perform handheld, bedside ultrasound scans using a machine smaller than a tablet, to look at the position of the baby. A competency-based, cascading, training program has enabled safe introduction of this initiative."**

**"We are delighted that this study has shown that the benefits to the mother and baby are equivalent to a formal scan performed by an ultra-sonographer. This keeps care in the community and woman centred. We hope that the data from NNUH and St George's provides the stimulus for a national policy of third trimester scanning. In addition, this study has demonstrated that use of a hand-held ultrasound device by a midwife is an innovative, progressive, and now proven, way of achieving this."**

Pam Sizer, Midwifery Matron, and Sam Knights, Community Midwife Team Leader, added: **"In line with Better Births and our commitment to Sign up to Safety, it was our plan to provide a safer, more amenable service to women as part of their routine care. The pathway is now fully embedded in routine care and offered to all women from 36/40 weeks gestation. The results are fantastic, resulting in a drastic reduction in the amount of undiagnosed breech presentation births. Not only has this been well received by the women, but the midwives are also pleased to be able to enhance their care at point of contact and offer an even more holistic approach."**



# Marking 75 years of the NHS

The National Health Service marks its 75th anniversary on 5 July 2023.

When it was founded in 1948, the NHS was the first universal health system to be available to all, free at the point of delivery and is an institution that touches all our lives. This is because, over the last 75 years, the NHS has always evolved and adapted to meet the needs of each successive generation.

The NHS has delivered huge medical advances, including the world's first liver, heart and lung transplant in 1987, pioneering new treatments such as robotic-assisted surgery and the world's first rapid whole genome sequencing service for seriously ill babies and children. None of this innovation would be possible without the skill and expertise of NHS staff, volunteers and our partners in the social care sector.

As we mark 75 years of the NHS, we are looking back on our achievements, as well as looking ahead to the opportunities we have to shape the next 75.



Tom Spink, NNUH Chairman, said: **"We are proud of the achievements of the NHS over the last 75 years and the NNUH's vital role within Norfolk and Waveney. We were humbled by the public support for our hospital's 250th anniversary last year and I'd like to thank all our patients, carers and local community for their support and pay tribute to our more than 10,000 staff and volunteers for their dedication and hard work."**

**"Our services are constantly evolving to meet the needs of our patients, and we are proud to be offering state-of-the-art healthcare including our award-winning Virtual Ward, robotic-assisted surgery, which is improving outcomes and recovery times for patients, and we are playing a key role in tailored genomic treatments."**

**"We acknowledge how difficult the Covid pandemic and our ongoing recovery from the pandemic has been for staff, patients and carers. I want to reassure everyone that the NNUH Board is working hard to reduce vacancies and, with our health and social care partners in Norfolk and Waveney, to reduce the pressures on our hospital."**

For more information about the history of NNUH, visit [www.nnuh.nhs.uk/about-us/250th-anniversary-of-nn-hospital](http://www.nnuh.nhs.uk/about-us/250th-anniversary-of-nn-hospital)



## Setting the pace on cancer treatment innovation

Dr Tom Roques has been a Consultant Oncologist at NNUH for 19 years and has a national role as the Vice President for Oncology at the Royal College of Radiologists.

Tom sees patients with a variety of cancer types including head and neck cancer, thyroid, oesophageal and pancreatic cancer.

He said: **"The last few years have seen the faster development of better cancer treatments. We have more drugs we can give in a more targeted and precise way for individual patients which means we can keep them alive for longer. We also have better ways to target radiotherapy exactly where it needs to go. This means we can deliver stereotactic radiotherapy - giving radiation in large doses to precise targets to try and reduce side effects."**

**"We're always innovating here and looking at the development of new techniques and research is a big part of what we do."**

**"We have amazing teams of professionals who all play an important part in a patient's treatment. For example, in head and neck cancer,**

**which requires probably the most complex radiotherapy that we give, the doctor sees the patient in the outpatient appointment initially, then all of the treatment that we give, and ongoing care, is done entirely by therapy radiographers, specialist nurses, dietitians and speech and language therapists, who see the patient every week during treatment. We meet as a team to discuss progress and give a lot of focus to minimising any side-effects. This approach means that we tailor support for each patient and keep them at home during their treatment."**

Tom is a keen runner and involved in parkrun. **"I've run for 10 years, and this year at the Colney Lane parkrun we're trying to do a big celebration for the NHS 75th Birthday on 8 July."**

To volunteer on the day please email [colneylane@parkrun.com](mailto:colneylane@parkrun.com) to help.



To celebrate 75 years of the NHS, we asked 75 members of Team NNUH what they enjoy most about their role and advice to people thinking about a career in healthcare. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram to see all 75 over the next few months.



## Christian Agero, Emergency Department Deputy Charge Nurse

"What I like the most is when patients and their families express their thankfulness and gratitude for the care that they received.

"Working in the NHS means working with people with different cultures and beliefs. My greatest advice is to be a good listener - listen twice as much as you talk. This will help you to develop your ability to take directions well, to be part of a team with an enthusiasm for helping others and to deliver on what is expected of you."



## Victoria Cole, Biomedical Scientist

"I am proud to be part of a very hard-working team. We face massive challenges with the huge daily workload to serve the hospital and the GPs in Norfolk. I am proud to be part of a team that plays an integral role in the care of the majority of patients.

The role of a Biomedical Scientist is always interesting. Advances in medicine, science and technology mean that the role is always changing."



## Sarah Aldis, Healthcare Assistant

"What I love about my role as an HCA is being part of a dedicated team and getting to know my patients and assisting them with their care and recovery.

I also enjoy mentoring new staff members when they start on Edgefield Ward as well the ability to learn something new regarding my role almost every day. I find being an HCA a very rewarding job and I am proud to be part of the NHS.

My advice to someone interested in a career in the NHS would be to be prepared for good days, bad days, highs, and lows, lots of hard work but a very rewarding job knowing you have made a difference."



## James Artherton-Howlett, Senior Dementia Support Worker

"Living with dementia whilst in hospital can be a challenging time, I enjoy finding out about people and use this to help the person remain engaged and calm throughout their time here, this could be providing meaningful activity.

I also enjoy helping staff understand dementia from the persons perspective and supporting their families/carers."



## Irshad Shaikh, Consultant Surgeon

"The job brings immense satisfaction treating all sorts of surgical patients. It is a privilege to make a positive impact on people's lives.

The results of our intervention make huge positive difference in a patient's life, society and NHS in general.

The NHS remains one of the best places to work. If you love your job, you can make a difference. There is a huge support available for career progression."



## Lisa Sutherland, Tissue Viability and Complex Wound Care Nurse Consultant

"I have met some of the most interesting people with amazing work careers, personal stories and history. I'm privileged to be allowed into their lives at a vulnerable time when most don't really want to ask for help. To be trusted to support them and their families to gain the best outcome you can for them is very humbling and absolutely the best thing about my role. Every day I can make a difference to someone of any age, no matter how small it may be at the time, whether it may be a colleague, a family member or a patient."





## NNUH consultant and team performs life changing surgeries to children in India

**A Consultant Spinal Surgeon has recently returned from India where he performed corrective surgery on children with complex scoliosis.**

Mr Girish Swamy was joined by retired NNUH Consultant Spinal Surgeon Mr Bob Crawford, former President of the British Scoliosis Society, and two other surgeons from Italy and Palestine. They were invited by Operation Straight Spine Trust, a charity which funds surgical and medical care for underprivileged children with musculoskeletal diseases in India. They were also joined by Joanne Siliprandi, Surgical Care Practitioner in Spinal Surgery at NNUH and Michael Farrow, Orthopaedic Department Practitioner at Spire hospital in Norwich.

Scoliosis is a condition where the spine twists and curves. Without corrective surgery patients can live in severe pain, disability and can suffer from recurrent chest infections and heart problems.

The team spent a week in Kolkata and operated on 11 children aged between two and 18, from India, Nepal and Bangladesh. They performed growth rod insertion in very young children and more definitive fixations in older patients to correct and straighten the spine. Each operation can take more than eight hours and are extremely complex because the work is carried out so close to the spinal cord and the spinal nerves. The operations were observed by over 25 other surgeons from the three countries and nursing staff from Kolkata were also given specialist training in managing these complex patients.

Mr Swamy said: **"Scoliosis is a condition which can be treated, but with highly specialised care and surgery. Without an operation, patients struggle with day-to-day life and can become severely disabled, so it really is life changing. Without the charity funding, these underprivileged children wouldn't have been able to have these complex and expensive surgeries. All the operations were successful, and the local team were very impressed and grateful for our teaching too and would like us to go back next year. My colleagues and the wider spinal team at NNUH are excited and would love to help again."**



## Grounds for optimism with new planting programme

**A new conservation approach is being adopted for the grounds of our hospital.**

Many new trees have been planted along with shrubs and a new wildflower area in response to our changing climate.

We have one of the greenest hospital grounds in the country. However, we are an urban site with some of our original trees planted in 2001 beginning to struggle owing to the heat, soil compaction and water runoff.

Well cared for trees help to cool the in-patient ward side of the hospital, help lower carbon emissions, and provide cleaner air.

New wildflower matting has also been installed near to the new ward block. Mulching is taking place as well as the pausing of pruning to preserve the trees on the hospital estate and help our tree stock in having lower tree canopies, shading their own roots from water evaporation.

**Emma Jarvis, Environmental Arts Manager, said staff, patients and visitors can expect to see less mowing and a more natural landscape to promote conservation.**

**"We are putting multi-stemmed varieties in place and trees that will be better suited to our environment at NNUH.**

**We are used to things being well manicured, but we need to look at conservation and preservation. Nature isn't neat and tidy, and we need to let nature be nature."**



## Mapping skin cancer trends using big data

**As we head into the summer months, it is a sobering statistic to learn that one in five of us will get skin cancer in our lifetimes.**

Our ageing population, changing sun exposure behaviours and improvements to cancer registration are believed to be the reason why there was a 26% increase in skin cancer cases between 2013 and 2019 and is the most common diagnosed cancer in England. The most common cause of skin cancer and premature skin ageing is exposure to ultraviolet light from the sun or sunbeds, so, taking sensible precautions to protect your skin from the sun is likely to reduce your risk of developing a skin cancer in the future.

Dr Zoe Venables, pictured right, is a Clinical Associate Professor and Consultant Dermatologist. She has worked for us for the last three years and works as Dermatology Clinical Lead for the National Disease Registration Service, which is part of NHS Digital.

She said: **“Our workload in dermatology clinics has increased over the years and our work related to skin cancer treatment. Melanoma is the skin cancer that more people might know about, which often looks like a changing or new mole, but we are also seeing an increasing number of non-melanoma skin cancers, which usually appear as a lump, ulcer, scab or discoloured patch of skin.”**

**“It is really important to protect your skin from a young age as skin cancer is caused by the cumulative damage of sun exposure and people tend to develop problems when they get older.”**

As part of her role as Clinical Associate Professor, Dr Venables is working on skin cancer epidemiology research to produce good quality data to improve awareness and support skin cancer research and prevention programmes. Her work has already discovered the growing number of non-melanoma skin cancers.

She said: **“Non-melanoma skin cancer is much more common than melanoma, but if it is caught early, most people survive it and it is easily treated. Non-melanoma skin cancers are getting more common because of our ageing population. Also, the climate is getting hotter and if people are spending more time out in the sunshine, this will also have an impact.”**

**“During the Covid-19 pandemic we understood how important healthcare statistics are to highlight where we should focus our energy and funding for research, service funding and education. We are beginning to realise the importance of big data and its potential with Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the future.”**



## Sun safety protection tips

- Spend time in the shade during the sunniest part of the day when the sun is at its strongest, which is usually between 11am and 3pm in the summer months.
- Avoid direct sun exposure for babies and very young children.
- When it is not possible to limit your time in the sunniest part of the day, keeping yourself well covered, with a hat, long sleeved clothing and sunglasses, can give you additional protection.
- Apply at least factor 30 sunscreen liberally to exposed areas of skin. Re-apply every two hours and straight after swimming, sweating or towelling to maintain protection.

Non-melanoma skin cancers vary greatly in what they look like.

They tend to appear gradually on the skin, and slowly get bigger over time. They will not go away on their own without treatment.

**If you are worried about your skin, contact your GP to get it checked out.**





## New clinic for patients with head and neck cancer

**Our head and neck cancer team are bringing services closer to home for their patients living on the coast with the launch of two clinics at Cromer Hospital.**

The team comprises Erica Everitt, Senior Matron for Head and Neck Cancer Services and Tracheostomy Support Services, and Head and Neck Specialist Nurses Cristina Fernandes, Astra Rutherford-Hall and Helen Goward. They run two parallel clinics: One is a nurse-led clinic focusing on general wellbeing, ongoing assessment, giving advice, and aimed at helping patients with their ongoing management of their condition. The other is a consultant-led clinic run by Mr Alfred Addison who will see patients needing more expert clinical input such as a review of any change in their cancer status, or who need more exploratory work or follow-up procedures.

Having been given the opportunity to take clinic space in the new North Norfolk Macmillan Centre in Cromer, patients living in North Norfolk no longer have to travel to NNUH for follow-up clinics, making clinics more accessible.

Cristina said: **"I will look at pain relief, wound dressings, write to their GP and if I'm taking Moving Forward clinics for my more established patients, I will be looking at helping them have a much more proactive approach to their ongoing care."**

**This means we have a much better chance of helping patients sooner. It also means they can be more independent and manage their own maintenance so they can return to as normal a life as possible."**



A large part of the Moving Forward sessions is to help the patients psychologically as their wellbeing is of particular importance.

Erica said: **"Head and neck cancers have such a huge impact on our patients. They need a high level of support because these cancers are very visible. You might have had part of your jaw removed; you might speak differently, be unable to speak or have a feeding tube. You may have had your whole nose removed or require a tracheostomy tube to breathe through."**

## New optical scanner funded by hospital charity

**Cromer Hospital is making good use of a new Heidelberg optical coherence tomography scanner (OCT) which was funded by the N&N Hospitals Charity.**

Chris Grayston, Operations Manager for Cromer, said: **"We are always looking for opportunities to improve our services and having access to the latest technology is a great benefit to our patients."**

John Paul Garside, Director of the N&N Hospitals Charity says: **"It's good to see patients in rural North Norfolk benefit from new technology thanks to the support our charity receives from the local community around Cromer Hospital."**

The technology produces a 3D image and can also measure, for example, optic discs on patients with or without glaucoma enabling the clinicians to monitor and treat any progression of the disease. The machines are widely used for the monitoring of Wet macular degeneration which usually progresses quickly, and vision loss can occur rapidly if left untreated.

The equipment can diagnose lesions within the eye which can lead to an oncology referral, essentially the equipment can be lifesaving if an eye tumour is diagnosed quickly. The scans can be carried out without dilating the eye, meaning less discomfort for patients and less time for vision to return to normal, and can replace invasive procedures involving dye injections.

Prior to OCT technology a flat 2D image was taken of the retina/disc on a retinal camera with no measurements or other crucial information.



*Ophthalmic Photographer Lisa Bellamy and NNUH CEO Sam Higginson with the new scanner*

# N&N

**Norfolk & Norwich Hospitals Charity**