



King's College Hospital  
NHS Foundation Trust

# INSIDE King's

WINTER ISSUE 2022/23



## Finding hidden conditions

Meet the Inherited Cardiac Conditions team

# Welcome



## I hope you enjoy this second edition of Inside King's.

We received a number of positive comments about the first edition published last summer, and if you would like to share your feedback about this one, please email [kch-tr.CorporateCommunications@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.CorporateCommunications@nhs.net) and tell us what you think.

Life at the Trust continues at pace, and I am incredibly grateful to my 15,000 colleagues for everything they do. Demand for NHS services is extremely high at present, and not just at King's – it's a challenge facing hospitals up and down the country.

Supporting our staff is key, so I am delighted that we opened our new staff wellbeing hub at Orpington Hospital, meaning we now have dedicated spaces across our three main hospital sites for staff to rest and relax in. We also recognised colleagues at the King's Stars awards ceremony in November, which was a superb event.

As always, there is a huge amount to celebrate, and this edition of Inside King's is no exception. In this edition, you can read about our new work experience programme that has already benefited over 200 young students. You can also read about the fantastic efforts of our endoscopy team to reduce waiting times, and read how our emergency planning team prepare for any and all eventualities to ensure we keep patients and staff safe.

Finally, I would like to welcome Charles Alexander, who took on the role of Joint Chairman for King's and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts on 1 December. Charles will be a superb champion of both organisations, and I am looking forward to working with him.

**Professor Clive Kay**

Chief Executive

# INSIDE King's

## Meet the team

Words and photos by Communications Team.

Cover photo by Nial Anderson.

Design: [mikelebianstudio.com](http://mikelebianstudio.com)

Front cover: Inherited Cardiac Conditions (ICC) team.



## Staying up to date

As well as reading Inside King's, you can stay up to date about what's happening at the Trust via social media, and our website.



@KingsCollegeNHS



@KingsCollegeHospital



@KingsCollegeHospital



www.kch.nhs.uk

If you have any comments or feedback on this magazine then please contact:

 [kch-tr.CorporateCommunications@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.CorporateCommunications@nhs.net)

# Contents

**04 QUICK READS**  
The latest news and events from our hospitals

**06 IN DEPTH**  
Catch up on this year's King's Stars awards event

**08 BRILLIANT PEOPLE**  
Learn about a new work experience programme that has been launched

**09 EXPERIENCE**  
Shorter waiting lists for King's endoscopy services

**10 OUTSTANDING CARE**  
Learn about the work of our Emergency Planning Team

**12 OUTSTANDING CARE**  
A look into the work of our Inherited Cardiac Conditions service

**14 EXPERIENCE**  
Read about Siân, who beat cancer at King's and hiked 18 miles to raise money for charity

## New staff wellbeing hub opens at Orpington Hospital



**Above:** Gareth Bacon MP with Clive Kay

**A** new wellbeing hub for staff working at Orpington Hospital has been opened by Gareth Bacon MP.

The hub has been funded by the Trust, with a generous donation from the Friends of Orpington Hospital.

Gareth Bacon said: *“I’d like to thank the Friends of Orpington Hospital and staff within the Trust who have made this happen, and I hope you enjoy using this facility, which looks fantastic.”*

Professor Clive Kay, Chief Executive of King’s, said: *“We know how important facilities like this are, and I am very pleased that we have been able to create such a fantastic space. I hope staff will enjoy this facility for many years to come.”*

## New unit opens in honour of pioneer surgeon



**Above:** The Gillies Unit is run by King’s and treats thousands of patients every year

**T**he refurbished oral and maxillofacial surgery department at Queen Mary’s Hospital, Sidcup was officially re-opened in December.

The Gillies Unit treats patients with dental and facial deformities, some of whom will go on to have jaw surgery. It also treats patients with skin cancers affecting the mouth, face, and head, as well as those needing routine dental and orthodontic treatment.

The new unit – which now has extra clinic rooms, plus specialist scanning and laboratory space – is named after Harold Gillies, who was based at Queen Mary’s in the early 1900s, during which time the hospital treated hundreds of soldiers with facial injuries sustained in the First World War.

In treating these patients, Gillies helped establish plastic surgery procedures that have since been developed and used across the world.



**Above:** Mahima Gurung

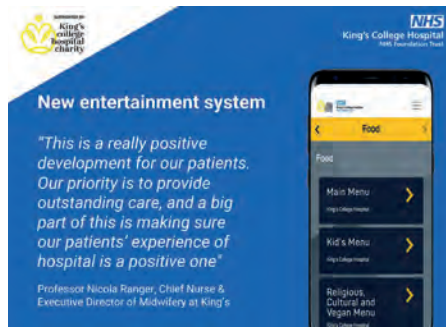
## Become a member of King's

**A**s a Foundation Trust, King's has a membership made up of local people, patients and staff. Being a member gives you more say in how your local hospital is run – so why not get involved!

Benefits of becoming a member include:

- Membership is free
- Have a say in your local hospital services
- Help us provide the right care for you and your community
- Elect the governors at King's, or stand to be a governor yourself.

To join you can follow the 'membership' link on the King's website [www.kch.nhs.uk](http://www.kch.nhs.uk) email [kch-tr.members@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.members@nhs.net) or call our Foundation Trust office on **020 3299 8785**.



## Patient Entertainment success

**S**ix months after launching, our Patient Entertainment System – funded by King's College Hospital Charity – has provided over 46,000 hours of entertainment for patients.

The system is free, and enables patients to stream TV, video games and magazines for free at the touch of a button, either via a tablet, or their mobile phone.

Our hospital volunteers are also supporting the initiative by distributing tablets for patients to use, with a superb 1,667 hours volunteered so far!

## Health Minister visits King's to mark World AIDS Day

**O**n 1 December, Health Minister Stephen Barclay MP visited

King's College Hospital to see how patients visiting our Emergency Department (ED) are tested for HIV.

All patients having a blood test in our ED are also tested for HIV, unless they choose to opt out. Initially piloted at King's, this approach has now been adopted by A&Es across the country.

Stephen Barclay met staff in our ED, blood testing and sexual health services to find out more about the service, and the benefits for patients.



## National Dental Nurses Day

**I**n November, we celebrated some of our brilliant dental nurses as part of National Dental Nurses Day.

At King's, we employ over 160 dental nurses, and treat over 175,000 dental patients every single year.

Mahima Gurung is a Dental Nurse Trainer, and has worked at the Trust since 2011.

She said: *"Being at King's has provided me with the opportunity to work with various dental specialties and treatments. Using my knowledge and experience*

*gained, I am now able to pass this on and help train the next generation of dental nurses."*

Dental Nurses Day is celebrated every year as a way of recognising the difference dental nurses make across the country.

# Celebrating our staff at King's Stars event

In November, we celebrated our staff at the King's Stars awards, following a three-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Over 350 staff attended a special awards evening in central London, which was generously supported by King's College Hospital Charity.**

The event was hosted by BBC journalist Ros Atkins, who shared his personal experiences of being a patient at King's, and spoke positively about the care and treatment he received.

From 450 written nominations, a judging panel selected three nominees and a winner for each category, except the Lifesaver of the Year Award which was decided by public vote.

A total of ten awards were given out on the evening to the following teams and individuals:



**Brilliant People award**  
Estrelita Balentogo, Matron



**Leaders in Research, Innovation and Education Award**  
Dr Lalani Carlton-Jones, Consultant Neuroradiologist



**Values Award (Kind)**  
Annabel Davies, Team Lead, Speech & Language Therapist, Neurorehab



**Lifesaver of the Year Award**  
Trust vaccination teams



**Outstanding Care Award**  
Irina Belun-Vieira, Head of Nursing,  
Cancer

*“COVID-19 has been a challenge like no other, but throughout it all, the way our teams went above and beyond – and continue to – is an inspiration to myself, and the many patients who use our services.”*

**Professor Clive Kay,  
Chief Executive**



**Values Award (Respectful)**  
Dr Leena Srivastava, Consultant  
in Palliative Care Medicine



**Diversity, Equality  
and Inclusion Award**  
Child Health Equality, Diversity  
and Inclusion group



**Chief Executive's Award**  
Emergency Department, PRUH &  
Emergency Department, Denmark Hill



**Chairman's Award**  
King's Volunteers Service



**Team of the Year Award**  
iMobile Nursing team  
(King's College Hospital)

# "I can't thank the Trust enough"

## Success for new work experience programme

**A new work experience programme at the Trust is offering young people the chance to get hands-on healthcare experience and learn more about a career in the NHS.**

Between December 2021 and July 2022, 203 students took up work experience placements across 46 hospital departments.

The programme was made possible by a generous donation from a family to King's College Hospital Charity, and was set-up with the aim of providing opportunities to young people who are interested in a career in healthcare but lack the connections in the NHS to arrange a work experience placement.

James D'Silva, 17, applied to do work experience on the orthopaedic wards at the PRUH and loved every minute of his time with us. "The experience was fantastic," James told us, "I was able to sit in on meetings and trauma clinics, observe live surgery and work alongside staff as they cared for patients – everyone was warm and enthusiastic and I could sense the passion for their work."

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*"I want to study medicine at university, so to have this experience will be really useful for my application."*

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For James' mum Natasha, finding work experience in the NHS had been hard to secure: "As someone without any links to NHS staff, and as a widow, it was difficult for me to help James get the experience he wanted. This programme couldn't have been better timed and I can already see how it's helped with his maturity and focus.

"I can't thank the Trust enough. I'm grateful to all your staff who recognised James' abilities and trusted him to help them with their work."

James told us the experience has reinforced his ambition to work in the NHS: "Now that I've had that hands-on experience, I'm keen to pursue my dream of becoming an NHS doctor. I was actually born at the PRUH, so I'd love to go back there one day as a member of staff!"



**Above:** Natasha and James D'Silva

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For more information about work experience opportunities at the Trust, email

✉ [kch-tr.workexperience@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.workexperience@nhs.net)



# Shorter waiting lists for King's endoscopy services

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic meant that waiting times for endoscopy services grew, partly because of increased staff sickness levels, but also due to infection control measures that had to be put in place to protect our patients and their carers.

Endoscopy services are crucial in the diagnosis and monitoring of diseases. Patients have endoscopies to check for signs of cancer, especially if they are experiencing abnormal bleeding, continued indigestion, iron deficiency, or difficulty swallowing. Samples can also be taken from the patient, and these biopsies are checked for signs of cancer.

Dr Shraddha Gulati, Consultant Gastroenterologist, Interventional Endoscopist and Co-clinical Lead for Endoscopy at King's, explained: "During the initial phase of the pandemic, huge numbers from our team were redeployed to help care for patients with COVID-19. Along with hospital services across the UK, we were asked to reduce our services and focus on emergency procedures such as gastrointestinal bleeds and treating cancer patients. This meant our waiting list for less urgent diagnostic, surveillance and therapeutic patients grew.



**Above:** Dr Shraddha Gulati

*"Nobody wants to see patients waiting too long for treatment. We knew that we needed to bring down waiting times and see people as soon as they need our care.*

*"We recruited 36 new nursing staff, as well as more endoscopists to the team, and put together a more intensive training programme so they could start caring for patients much more quickly. The team worked with other hospitals, so patients could be treated at alternative locations. We're also extremely proud of our new room for endoscopy services, which was built in just 10 weeks, and has*

## Reducing waiting times in endoscopy

In March 2020, 620 patients were waiting for their first diagnostic procedure – this had reduced to just four patients in November 2022.

In March 2020, 1,500 patients were on the waiting list for an endoscopic procedure – thanks to the efforts our teams, this had reduced to 600 patients by November 2022.

*meant we can work through our waiting lists as speedily as possible.*

*"When it comes to reducing waiting times for our current patients, the work never stops, and it wouldn't be possible without working together as a team. My fantastic colleagues, including Dr Deepak Joshi, Shonette Charles-Nurse, Fatima Mbuku Masakidi, Dave Kyle and Louise Bensaid go above and beyond to make sure our patients have the best care we can provide.*

*"Adjusting our services in a world with COVID-19 has been a lot of hard work, but our patients are happier and healthier as a result."*

# There's a plan for that...

James Cook, Sabin Bran-Craciun and Claire Territt make up our Emergency Planning Team, who are here to make sure that Team King's can continue to deliver safe care of the highest possible quality, whatever emergencies might come our way.



**Above:** A test landing by a military helicopter, the largest craft that can land on the King's College Hospital helideck.

## OUTSTANDING CARE



**Above:** Staff try on the special hazmat (hazardous materials) suits that are used if they might be exposed to dangerous materials or chemicals.



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*“Our team is privileged to see the huge team effort that goes into making sure we can always prioritise patient care, and protect the public, no matter what challenges lie ahead.”*

**James Cook**

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Anything that could cause harm or disruption to the UK, and specifically our patients and staff, is classed as an emergency. And the past few years have shown you can never be too prepared.

Whether it's an unexpected heatwave, a national emergency, or a global infectious disease outbreak, the Trust's Emergency Planning Team is on hand to make sure we can rise to the challenge, and support colleagues to respond as quickly as we can.

James Cook, Emergency Planning Manager at King's, explains: *“Our team of three works with everyone across the Trust, including colleagues at the PRUH, Orpington Hospital, Beckenham Beacon and Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup,*

*to make sure we can continue to be there for our patients in the most challenging of circumstances. We also work very closely with other organisations including the Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade, the military, London Ambulance Service, NHS England, UK Health Security Agency, and other health and social care partners.*

*“It's impossible to predict exactly how a crisis situation will unfold. What we can do is make sure we're prepared for any emergency, anticipate potential problems as they develop, and take rapid and effective action when it's needed. For example, following the London Brigade terrorist attack and the Grenfell Tower fire, both in 2017, we needed to make sure we*

*could support casualties and first responders, as well as our staff.*

*“The COVID-19 pandemic tested our emergency response in the face of a major incident like nothing ever before. More recently, our team has been looking at the issues that could be caused by blood cell shortages and gas supply problems. We have an in-depth-planning process for all kinds of eventualities, including planned emergency exercises where staff rehearse our response to major incidents.*

*“Our team is privileged to see the huge team effort that goes into making sure we can always prioritise patient care, and protect the public, no matter what challenges lie ahead.”*

# Finding hidden conditions

**M**ost patients come to hospital when they feel unwell but in some cases, our teams can reach the patient before any health problems arise.

Our Inherited Cardiac Conditions (ICC) service provides life-long care for adults affected by inherited heart disease, which can include predictive genetic testing to confirm whether other relatives may develop the condition too.

*“Results of genetic testing can provide a diagnosis of a rare genetic condition where routine diagnostic tests are unable to,”* said Liz Wilson, Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) for Inherited Cardiac Conditions.

*“Genetic testing can also directly impact the treatment we provide for patients. For example, genetic testing might identify a patient as being at greater risk of sudden death due to a rare problem with their heart, which means we can offer them a device such as an internal defibrillator as a preventative measure.”*

*“With genetic conditions, we have to always consider a patient’s parents, siblings or children as there is a risk of it being passed on. The risk from a parent passing the condition onto a child could be as high as 50%, for example.”*

*“Pre-symptomatic testing, also known as predictive genetic testing, can provide confirmation as to whether a relative is likely to develop the condition at some point over their lifetime, and helps our team in decisions on how often to follow up these family members.”*

The main risk for ICC patients is sudden death, which can be reduced through medications, lifestyle advice, and devices such as an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD) insertion for those at the highest risk.

The ICC team identify conditions such as inherited cardiomyopathies, inherited arrhythmia syndromes, unexplained cardiac arrest, and neuromuscular conditions. Lifelong care means regular clinical review and risk assessment, education and support, and offering genetic assessment for a patient (and their family).

This is done through our outpatient service at King’s, where we provide specialist clinics run by the consultant and clinical nurse specialist (CNS) team. The ICC CNS team also review some inpatients, particularly those with an unconfirmed diagnosis.

*“We strive to always improve the diagnosis, treatment and outcomes for our patients as well as their families. It is important to recognise the psychological component of genetic testing, and this is as important as the medical treatment we provide. This is why we offer counselling for patients and their relatives before and after the genetic tests are completed,”* says Liz.

*“A genetic result can explain why this has happened to a patient and their family, and opens up a large range of support resources and groups, as anxiety and depression are a real issue for some patients.”*

*“In some cases, we can offer specialist reproductive (family planning) advice, screening and options for patients planning a family to reduce the risk of passing on a genetic condition to their children, and this is currently facilitated through our genetic counsellor.”*

The core team at King’s consists of three ICC Consultants based at Guys and St Thomas’, a cardiology consultant with special interest in ICC at King’s, a CNS and coordinators. We also have a lead CNS who runs the CNS service across all hospital sites.

 [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/referral-guide/inherited-heart-cardiac-conditions](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/referral-guide/inherited-heart-cardiac-conditions)

## OUTSTANDING CARE

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*“Pre-symptomatic testing, also known as predictive genetic testing, can provide confirmation as to whether a relative is likely to develop the condition at some point over their lifetime, and helps our team in decisions on how often to follow up these family members.”*

***Liz Wilson***

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**Above:** The ICC team

# Siân beats cancer and hikes 18 miles

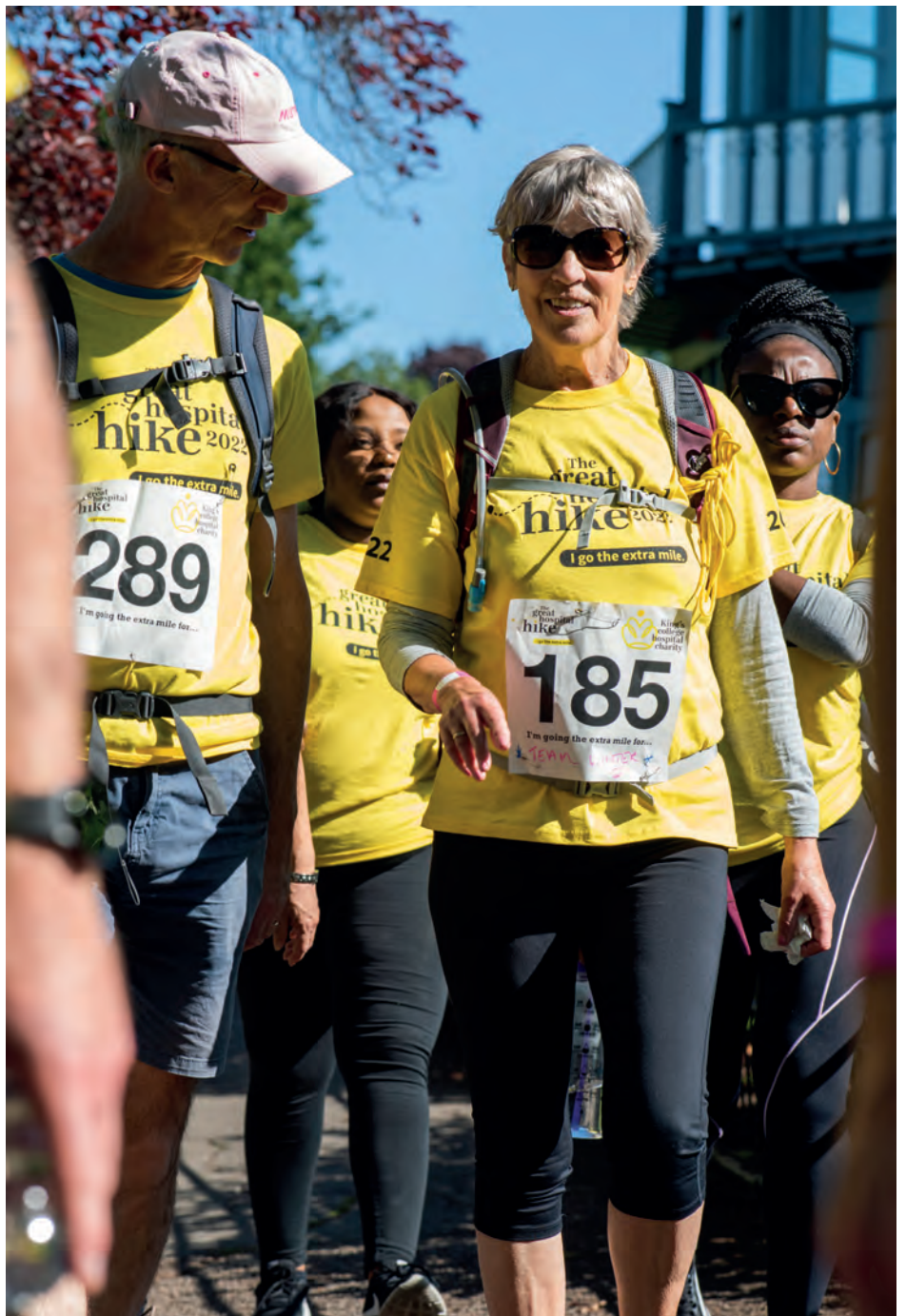
**Siân Winter owes her life to staff at King's.**

**O**n her 69th birthday this year – less than a year after learning to walk again – Siân took part in the King's College Hospital Charity's 18 mile Great Hospital Hike to celebrate her recovery from incurable cancer.

In 2019, Siân was diagnosed with stage 4 mantle cell non-Hodgkin lymphoma, a rare form of cancer. She was treated with several rounds of chemotherapy but each time the cancer returned. Siân was told that the condition was incurable, but in early 2021, King's was able to offer her hope through a cutting-edge treatment called CAR T therapy.

CAR T therapy is a complex immunotherapy treatment that is personally developed for each patient. Only just approved for use at King's, CAR T had been used to treat other forms of cancer but Siân was one of the first people in the UK to receive it for mantle cell lymphoma.

The treatment involves harvesting T cells – the immune cells that recognise and kill viruses – from the patient, reprogramming them to recognise cancer cells and infusing them back into the patient so they



**Above:** Siân Winter

attack the cancer. CAR T therapy carries the risk of very serious side effects but it had the potential to be a cure and Siân decided to go ahead. Unfortunately, the treatment had very severe consequences, and she was left fighting for her life.

*“My cancer was so aggressive that when they put my modified T cells back into my system my body just couldn’t cope with the sheer number of cancer cells that were breaking down. My immune system went into overdrive and I went into a coma quite quickly,”* says Siân.

Showing incredible strength and resilience, after 16 days of being in a coma, seven weeks in intensive care and a total of 110 days in King’s, Siân was declared cancer free and was discharged from hospital at the end of July 2021.

*“I was only the fourth person in the UK to receive CAR T therapy for mantle cell lymphoma and it cured me of incurable cancer,”* says Siân.

*“King’s undoubtedly saved my life, and the care I received went far beyond the norm. Everyone at King’s – the consultants, the doctors, the nurses and the health care assistants – really cared for me and they cared about me.*

*“I’d always been very fit and in control of my life, but all of this was taken away by the cancer. I couldn’t*



**Above:** Siân Winter

*walk, I couldn’t talk. My life was literally in their hands. They had to do everything for me, their care was amazing.*

*“The care extended to my family too. They really supported my husband and our children, helping them talk about what they were going through at such a difficult time.”*

Siân set herself the target of completing this year’s Great Hospital Hike after a 27-strong group of her family members and friends completed it last year, raising

£6,000 for King’s College Hospital Charity. The annual hike takes participants on a leafy route from King’s in Denmark Hill to the PRUH in Bromley.

*“The Hike is so important to me,”* says Siân, *“I want to support the wonderful staff at King’s and I want them to know that what they do is really appreciated by me, my family and our friends. I want to show them how much I appreciate what they did for me. I want to say: this is what you’ve done – you’ve cured me and now I can walk 18 miles!”*

A Healthier King's



King's College Hospital  
NHS Foundation Trust

**GET VACCINATED + PROJECT YOUR**

# Forcefield



**FLU JAB + COVID-19 BOOSTER**

FLU AND COVID-19 CAN BE LIFE THREATENING  
SO GET YOUR VACCINES NOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF  
AND YOUR FAMILY

**CHECK KINGSWEB OR TRUST WEBSITE FOR CLINIC DATES  
AND HOW TO GET VACCINATED**