

# INSIDE King's

SUMMER ISSUE 2022

## Living without pain

A new treatment for patients  
with sickle-cell disease

# Welcome



**I am delighted to write this introduction to Inside King's, our new magazine for patients, staff, and anyone with an interest in what is happening across our hospitals.**

Our new magazine – published every three months – is designed to keep you updated about key developments at the Trust, to showcase the work of our staff, and to share some of the ways in which patients and local people are supporting our efforts to provide outstanding care.

In this first edition of Inside King's, you can read about patient Ronke, who I am pleased to say is now pain-free after a successful stem cell transplant under the care of our haematology team. Ronke's story gives an insight into how challenging it can be to live with a long-term condition.

We've also included a feature about our new operating theatre at Orpington Hospital, which is helping to reduce waiting lists for routine treatment that have grown as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our teams are working as quickly as possible to get patients treated, and I am grateful to our patients for their understanding and ongoing support.

You can also read about our new King's Academy. Work has now started on the new facility, which is scheduled to open next year, so providing a dedicated education and training space for our nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. This is such an exciting development for the Trust, and positive news for the local area as well.

As ever, there is a huge amount going on, and I am incredibly grateful to my colleagues for everything they are doing. The support from patients and partner organisations – including King's College Hospital Charity – is also helping to lift spirits at what continues to be a very challenging time for the NHS.

**Professor Clive Kay**

Chief Executive

INSIDE  
**King's**

#### Meet the team

Words and photos by Nial Anderson.

Cover photo by Nial Anderson.

Design: mikelebianstudio.com

Front cover: Ronke, who underwent a stem cell transplant at King's



## 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)

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## YOUR KING'S

We speak to two patients helping to shape cancer services at King's

## King's nurse shortlisted for prestigious award



**Above:** Kate O'Donoghue

**K**ing's nurse Kate O'Donoghue has been shortlisted for the Nursing Older People Award at the RCN Nursing Awards. Winners will be announced in October this year.

Kate – who is a frailty nurse specialist – said: *“It's an honour to be recognised by the RCN and selected as a finalist for this award. Identifying frailty in our patients early on is crucial, and allows myself and fellow colleagues to put in place timely and preventative measures to support people to age well.”*

The RCN Nursing Awards celebrate innovation, skill and dedication in nursing across 14 categories, including Nursing Older Adults and Mental Health Nursing.

## New education and training academy taking shape

**W**ork has started on the creation of a new, state of the art education and training academy at the Trust for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals.

The new facility – located on Hinton Road, a short walk from King's College Hospital – will open in 2023, and provide dedicated simulation, teaching and conference rooms across a floor space of 820m<sup>2</sup>.

The facility will house two dedicated simulation rooms – containing one and two bedded bays respectively – and use the latest manikins to help train the healthcare professionals of the future.

Separate teaching rooms will enable staff to practice their technical skills for procedures such as inserting catheters and intravenous lines, which are used to give patients the medicine or fluids.



**Above:** Staff in the new King's Academy

Professor Nicola Ranger, Chief Nurse and Executive Director of Midwifery at the Trust, described the new facility as ‘an important step forward for King's’ and added:

*“We know how important education is for our staff, so to have a dedicated, state-of-the-art facility for us to use is so exciting. The new facility is going to be a true game-changer for King's, and also provide a training venue for healthcare professionals across London and the south east.”*

## Extra parking facilities at the PRUH

Work started in June to create additional car parking spaces at the Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH). The expansion involves installing a single-storey car parking deck in the main staff car park, located at the front of the PRUH as you enter from the A21/Farnborough Common Road.

The hospital will be open as usual, and patients and visitors can continue to use the available car parking at the front of the hospital, including the drop off and collection bays. Separate arrangements for staff with car parking permits at the PRUH have also been put in place whilst the works take place.

## New Brilliant People series

**T**he Trust has launched a new Brilliant People video series to celebrate just some of the many and varied roles held by colleagues working across our hospitals.

So far, our Brilliant People video series has featured a number of different roles, including a neurosurgeon, a security officer, and a maintenance service technician who helps maintain patient wheelchairs.



Above: Ash Vasireddy

A new short, one minute video is released every three weeks, and are available to watch online.

Watch the videos on our website  
[www.kch.nhs.uk](http://www.kch.nhs.uk)

## New Chairman appointed

**I**n July, we announced that Charles Alexander has been appointed Joint Chairman of King's and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts.

Charles is currently the Chairman of the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, and will take on his new role at King's and Guy's and St Thomas' from December this year.

He will succeed Sir Hugh Taylor, who has served as Chairman of Guy's and St Thomas' since 2011, and King's since 2019.

Meanwhile, Sue Slipman, Non-Executive Director and Deputy Chair at King's, stepped down from her role in July, after 10 years in the role. She described King's as 'an extraordinary place... full of brilliant people'.



Above: Charles Alexander

Visit our website  
[www.kch.nhs.uk](http://www.kch.nhs.uk)

## Trust appoints new Violence Reduction Matron

**C**helsie Sills has joined the Trust as our first ever Violence Reduction Matron.

Violence and aggression against NHS staff is a growing concern, and Chelsie – an experienced NHS nurse – will be working with staff and patients to help identify causes and workable solutions to the problem.



Above: Chelsie Sills

## New Wheelshare scheme launched

**The Trust has partnered with health-tech company Wheelshare to provide wheelchairs to patients visiting King's College Hospital.**

The wheelchairs, which are available in the entrance of the Hambleden Wing, will ensure patients are able to find a chair ready to use on their arrival.

The wheelchairs are free to patients for the first four hours, then cost £1 per additional hour.

# Building an estate fit for King's

King's is about people, but modernising our buildings and investing in new equipment is a vital part of delivering outstanding care

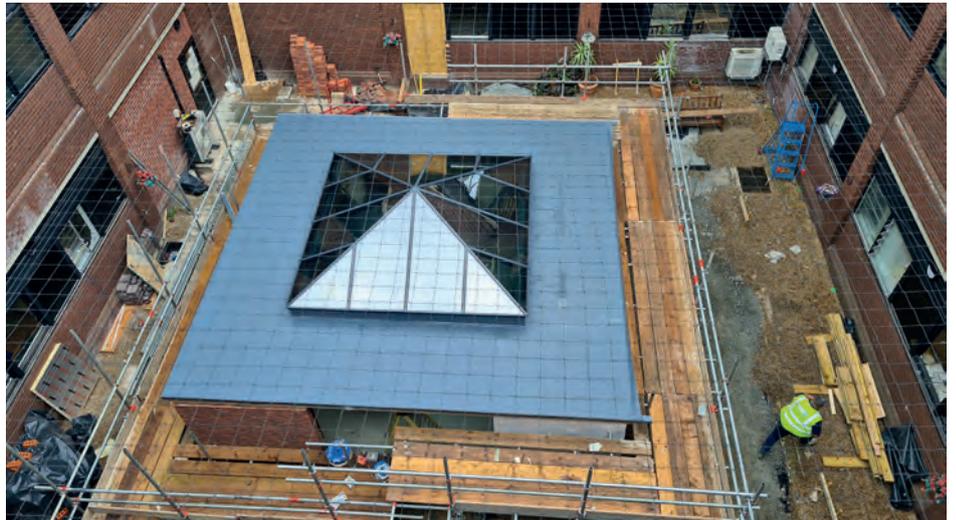
**O**ver the past year, the Trust has invested £60 million into new buildings and equipment, with construction projects taking place across all our hospital sites.

High profile examples include the new Willowfield Building at King's College Hospital, which is nearing completion. Once open, it will provide 48 new outpatient consultation rooms, and eight rooms for minor procedures.

The new Critical Care Unit at King's is also nearing completion and, once fully opened, will be one of the biggest centres of its kind in the country, and provide our teams with a state of the art facility in which to treat the sickest patients.

Just down the road at Loughborough Junction, the Trust has invested in a new space for therapy services at Coldharbour Works, with the facility also providing important office and meeting space for hospital staff.

Work is also underway to create a new education and training



**Above:** New wellbeing hub at Orpington Hospital taking shape

academy nearby, which will provide a dedicated space for nurses, midwives and allied healthcare professionals.

At PRUH, construction work has started to improve car parking facilities at the hospital, and to create a permanent corridor linking the Day Surgery Unit to the main hospital, which is better for patients. Plans for a new on-site endoscopy suite are also well advanced. A new operating theatre has also opened at Orpington Hospital, which you can read more

about on page 12 of this magazine.

New wellbeing hubs for staff have also been established at King's College Hospital and PRUH, with a rest and recuperation area for staff at Orpington Hospital opening later this year.

Lorcan Woods, Chief Financial Officer, said investing in new buildings and services is important:

*"We want patients to receive the best care possible, and we know the*

*environment in which people are treated is a key part of their overall experience of coming to hospital.”*

He added: *“We have invested in new buildings because we know the physical environment matters to patients, but we also want to provide staff with state of the art facilities that match the skill and expertise they show day in, day out.”*

In addition to new buildings, the Trust has also invested in new equipment – such as a new air handling unit for Davidson ward at King’s College Hospital, so ensuring the area now meets the latest infection prevention and control standards.

The Trust is also investing in a new electronic health record system, which will go live in October 2023.

The new system will make it easier for patients to book appointments and access information about their care, and also reduce the number of different IT systems in place at the Trust.

To stay up to date with these projects and much more, visit our website at: [www.kch.nhs.uk](https://www.kch.nhs.uk) or follow us on social media



**Above:** New Willowfield Building at King’s College Hospital

*“We want patients to receive the best care possible, and we know the environment in which people are treated is a key part of their overall experience of coming to hospital.”*

**Lorcan Woods,  
Chief Financial Officer**

# Helping people with learning difficulties thrive

Several young adults with learning difficulties have secured full time jobs at King's following a new work experience initiative.

**F**or the 2021-22 academic year, the Trust partnered with local colleges and voluntary organisations to help 14 young people gain valuable work experience in roles at King's College Hospital and the PRUH.

The interns are gaining 30 weeks of valuable work experience with seven at King's College Hospital and seven at PRUH. They are working across a number of specialities, including Therapies, Theatres, Cardiology, Receipt and Distribution and Housekeeping.

Interns were matched to their placements at the start of the year according to their skills, abilities and interests, and all have become valued members of the teams they are supporting.

One of the interns, Sam, said: *"I wanted to gain work experience, and to also gain more confidence in myself and be more independent."*

*"I have improved my communication skills by talking to patients over the phone and face-to-face."*

PRUH intern Amber was at first sceptical of working in a hospital, but after gaining work experience on the



**Above:** Back row: Jake, Dale and Will. Front row: Chloe, Amanda (job coach), Sally, Lizzie Wallman, Amber and Oliver

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*"I have improved my communication skills by talking to patients over the phone and face-to-face."*

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We are delighted to have worked with the following organisations as part of this initiative:

- DFN Project SEARCH
- Lambeth Council
- Lambeth College
- Unity Works
- Bromley Council
- London South East Colleges: Bromley

Children's Ward, she learned how to communicate effectively with others and is excited about working with children in the future.

*"I love it and I don't want to leave! I like the environment and I now have the confidence to make phone calls and can find my way to other departments independently to deliver and pick items up when required."*

The Trust has continued its partnership with DFN Project SEARCH, extending to the PRUH, for the 2022-23 academic year and we look forward to hosting more interns in the future.

# Transplant frees sickle cell patient from decades of pain

**A** 28-year-old Lambeth resident, who was diagnosed with sickle cell disease at the age of six, is now living pain-free after a successful stem cell transplant at King's.

In patients with sickle cell, red blood cells become distorted – restricting oxygen supply across the body. The condition, which is inherited, can cause severe pain, with patients often requiring hospital treatment.

Ronke Dosumu experienced her first sickle cell crisis aged five and recalls screaming out as she felt a continuous, sharp pain across her body.

For the next 20 years, Ronke experienced countless episodes of pain known as sickle cell crisis. She said: *“The severity of my symptoms meant that I would be admitted to hospital every other month. It affected my whole life – preventing me from going to school and making plans with friends and family.”*

At the age of 26, Ronke was admitted to King's under the care of consultant haematologist and sickle cell specialist, Dr Arne De Kreuk. She responded well to a series of blood transfusions and medication to manage the pain but months later,



**Above:** Ronke Dosumu

the episodes returned and it began to affect her ability to breathe.

Dr De Kreuk advised Ronke that she may benefit from a stem cell transplant – currently the only cure for the condition. The procedure is not performed often, due to the significant risks involved, but Ronke was determined to live as much of a pain-free life as possible.

For a stem cell transplant, stem cells from a healthy donor are delivered through a drip into a vein. The stem cells can turn into different types of blood cells and replace the distorted sickle cells.

A month after her transplant, Ronke said: *“I'm feeling well and haven't experienced any episodes since the transplant.”*

*“It feels surreal not to be living in pain but now I'm able to return to work and not be considered as unreliable, and make plans for the future.”*

*“The care I received at King's was phenomenal. I will forever be grateful to the dedicated team of nurses and doctors who supported me throughout this journey.”*

# Research is one of the key ways in which we provide outstanding care

**A**s well as providing direct patient care, many of our teams are helping to run clinical trials and studies designed to improve care, and develop new and exciting treatments for the future.

*“Giving patients the option of participating in a clinical trial or study is one of the ways in which we aim to provide outstanding care to our patients”* says Dr Leonie Penna, Chief Medical Officer at the Trust.

Both staff and patients understand why research is so important, and even the COVID-19 pandemic couldn't dampen enthusiasm for this vital aspect of patient care.

A total of 20,308 people took part in research studies at the Trust between April 2021 and March 2022 – and over 4,100 people have been over recruited into COVID-19 research studies since the start of the pandemic.

Our teams are actively recruiting patients into trials and research studies all the time. It is entirely up to patients if they want to take part, and staff who run research projects are always very happy to talk to people who want to find out more.

The range and type of studies and clinical trials on offer at the Trust at any one time are diverse, with an incredible 678 research studies running at the time of writing. Current studies include the national RECOVERY trial, which has already saved more than one million lives through the discovery of dexamethasone as a treatment for COVID-19.

*“Giving patients the option of participating in a clinical trial or study is one of the ways in which we aim to provide outstanding care to our patients.”*

Our teams are supporting the BouNDless trial, which is exploring new drug delivery methods for the treatment of Parkinson's disease, as well as the BOPPP trial, funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research, which is testing beta blockers as a way to treat certain complications of liver cirrhosis.

## Research in numbers

4,110 people have been recruited into COVID-19 research studies at the Trust since the start of the pandemic

20,308 of our patients took part in clinical trials and research studies during 2021/22

As of June 2022, there were 678 research studies open at the Trust

Staff are supported in their work by a dedicated research and development team, and also work closely with the King's Clinical Research Facility based on the King's College Hospital site.

Ann-Marie Murtagh, Director of Research & Innovation at King's, says research saves lives: *“I'm thankful for our passionate researchers and the amazing participants they work with to deliver first-class research that saves lives at King's, and around the world.”*

Want to find out more?

 @KCH\_Research

# King's neurosurgeons are first to identify area of the brain responsible for breathing

**N**eurosurgeons at King's have for the first time discovered the areas of the brain that control the movement of muscles responsible for breathing.

The Neuro-oncology team, who specialise in brain tumour removal, have created two new illustrated maps which appear as artistic illustrations of brain pathways. The maps also depict areas of the brain which have previously been shown to control hand movements and facial expressions such as smiling. They hope these will help surgeons to improve patient safety during brain surgery.

Led by consultant neurosurgeon Professor Keyoumars Ashkan, the team collected data from 180 patients who underwent surgery for brain tumours between 2015 to 2020.

During surgery, Prof Ashkan and his team used a nerve stimulation technique to identify areas of the brain that control movement across the body. The team collated their results and designed a new version of an existing map, known as the homunculus or miniature map of the human body, which depicts areas of the brain responsible for movements in the hands, legs and face.

The team also discovered and mapped the area of the brain



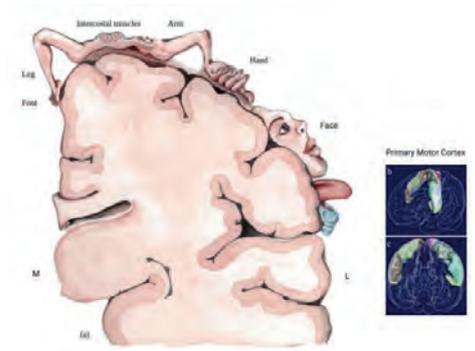
**Above:** L-R: Jose Pedro Lavrador, Ranjeev S Bhangoo, Prof Keyoumars Ashkan, Francesco Vergani, Prajwal Ghimire

responsible for the movement of the intercostal muscles – making them the first in the field to do so. The muscles allow the ribcage to expand and contract as we breathe.

Prof Ashkan's team also created a second map, which for the first time demonstrates the area of the brain responsible for the movement of the intercostal muscles.

He said: *"We hope the new maps will give neurosurgeons the confidence to effectively remove tumours of the brain, whilst ensuring the patient's safety."*

*"Our next step is to create an official atlas for the brain that can be applied by neurosurgeons in the UK and around the world, and revolutionise how we teach and practice brain surgeries."*



**Above:** One of the illustrated maps

Prof Ashkan made King's the subject of worldwide news in 2020 when he removed a brain tumour from patient Dagmar Turner who was awoken during surgery to play her violin. Dagmar was concerned the surgery would affect her ability to play violin so Prof Ashkan and his team took the unusual approach to ensuring her musical abilities would remain unaltered.

# Tackling the surgery backlog

Dominic Silva, from Bexleyheath, is one of the first patients to benefit from a new approach to routine surgery at the Trust

*"I'm keen to get back to work, start walking my dogs again and get on with my hobbies, which include fixing up cars and making items for my home. I'll soon be starting work on my next project: making a dining table out of a jet engine!"*

These are the words of Dominic, 55, who recently underwent a specialist shoulder operation at Orpington Hospital in a new, state of the art operating theatre which opened in March.

The new theatre and dedicated recovery suite at Orpington Hospital is just one of the steps that the Trust is taking to speed up patient access to routine surgery, with the latest figures showing more than six million people are now on an NHS waiting list as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*"Until my referral to Orpington Hospital, I didn't know it existed,"* Dominic said.

*"It's tucked away from the main road, and is in a leafy part of the town. While it is a small hospital, my experience was very good indeed. The new theatre was spotlessly clean and well-designed, and the team caring for me were always courteous, helpful and supportive."*

The building is a modular construction, which is more sustainable and is better for the environment. The steel used to create it has at least 25 per cent recycled content, and as the parts were built in an off-site factory – before being delivered and fitted together at the hospital – 90 per cent of the waste produced was also able to be recycled.



**Above:** Patient Dominic Silva with his dogs Rio and Bella

Patients from other hospitals in south east London are also expected to benefit from the new facility at Orpington, which will enable hundreds of extra operations to be carried out every year.

Similarly, surgeons from the Trust are using extra operating theatres that recently opened at Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup, as more hospitals work together to tackle the backlog caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jonathan Lofthouse, Site Chief Executive for PRUH/South Sites, including Orpington Hospital, said: *"The additional operating theatre is a fantastic addition to our services at Orpington Hospital. It is helping us tackle waiting lists that have grown during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those who are waiting for joint operations including knee and hip replacement surgery, so that patients receive the timely care they deserve."*



**Above:** The new operating theatre at Orpington Hospital

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*"It's tucked away from the main road, and is in a leafy part of the town. While it is a small hospital, my experience was very good indeed. The new theatre was spotlessly clean and well-designed, and the team caring for me were always courteous, helpful and supportive."*

**Dominic Silva**

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# Sreeja's Story



**Above:** Sreeja Poothamkutty

**In every edition of Inside King's, we will hear from a member of staff or patient in their own words.**

In this edition, it's the turn of Sreeja Poothamkutty, a nurse based at King's College Hospital, who helps care for trauma patients (those needing care for serious or life-threatening injuries).

*"I started working as a staff nurse in Katherine Monk ward, King's College Hospital, in January 2021.*

*"A person experiences high levels of emotional, psychological and physical stress following a trauma, which makes meeting their needs challenging, as we have to consider so many different things."*

*"Many of our patients require a lot of support, even for day to day tasks that many of us take for granted. Some trauma patients also need to spend a long time in hospital, often because of the surgery they've undergone – as a result, you form a deep and trusting relationship with your patients."*

*"We have seen patients who are in hospital for more than a year, and over that time, they will experience a range of emotions, as they come*

*to terms with what has happened to them. For some patients, their accident represents a life-changing event, and they may experience post traumatic stress disorder, which needs a professional approach to deal with."*

*"We see the traumatic experiences many of them go through, and it can affect you personally as well. I have seen nurses crying when a patient they have cared for gets discharged to rehabilitation centres. We want the best for them, but we also know what they have gone through to reach that point."*

*"I am incredibly grateful to the team I work with – their support helps me cope with the stresses and strains of the day. We care for our patients as a team, not as individuals."*

*"As a relatively new nurse, I find caring for trauma patients challenging, but always exciting, and I do feel like I am making a difference. Many of our patients and their relatives show how much they appreciate what we do – and that makes me stronger, and better equipped to face the pressures of the job. It can be difficult, but I can't imagine doing anything more rewarding."*

## Trauma care at King's

- King's College Hospital is one of four Major Trauma Centres in London
- Trauma injuries, including road traffic accidents, falls and penetrating injuries like knife wounds, are the leading cause of death in people under the age of 44
- Teams from King's featured in a special Channel 4 documentary series about trauma care called Emergency earlier this year

# Giving patients a voice

**A**ndy Jonesco and Billie Jean McPartlan are two patients helping to shape cancer services at King's for the better

Andy, 64, was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2018, and after successful treatment at the PRUH, he decided he wanted to give something back.

*"I trusted the people who cared for me, and it was clear that staff wanted to hear more from patients about their experiences. After my treatment, I attended some listening events organised by the hospital, but I felt that, as a group of patients, we needed to get ourselves organised."*

As a result, Andy, who lives in Beckenham, set up the King's Cancer Patient Voice group, which meets once a month, and counts cancer patients past and present, plus hospital staff, among its members.

*"The group is a trusted space for people to talk about our experiences of care. As important, we work with staff to make improvements – for example, feedback from the group helped improve communication between patients and staff, with Macmillan support staff now helping to field calls from patients at home when the cancer nurse specialists are busy on the wards."*

*"Living with cancer is frightening, but there is a great dynamic within*



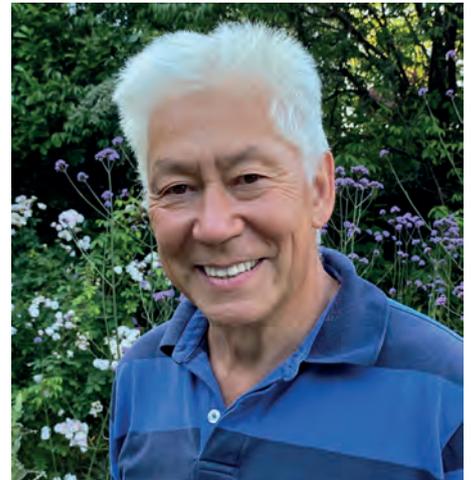
**Above:** Billie Jean McPartlan

*the group – and I do feel as though we are making a positive difference, which is the most important thing."*

Billie Jean McPartlan is also a member of the King's Cancer Patient Voice group. She is also a Trust Governor, a role in which she helps ensure the Trust's services are meeting the needs of patients, and local communities.

Billie is also a patient at King's College Hospital, having undergone two stem cell transplants for leukaemia, a cancer of the blood. She is currently being treated at the hospital for kidney failure.

*"Being part of the group is really helpful in my role as a governor, as it helps me understand how other patients are feeling. Like everyone, I want to feel I am making a positive difference, and the group is one way that empowers me to do so."*



**Above:** Andy Jonesco

*"Every patient has a different experience of cancer. The treatment plans for patients are so different depending on the type and severity of the cancer you have – but at the same time, we all share many of the same anxieties and fears that living with cancer can generate."*

Billie is full of praise for the care provided by staff at King's. She says: *"For me, it's the people who make King's special. There is a collective ambition to do the right thing for patients, and you can see how hard staff are working. They are so dedicated, and it's humbling and touching to see."*

**17<sup>th</sup> September**

Hike the 18 miles from King's College Hospital to the Princess Royal University Hospital and help raise vital funds for our hospitals.

Or join us for the home stretch – the Little Hospital Hike is only 3 miles long. You could even take part virtually, from anywhere in the world!

Whichever route you choose, walk with us and enjoy everything the day has to offer – iconic landmarks, good company, great fun and an incredible sense of achievement.



# The great hospital HIKE 2022



Step up to the challenge and help improve the lives of patients and staff.

Every step you take will be a step with friends, a step into the local community and a step forward for our hospitals.

**Put on your walking shoes and let's go the extra mile!**

Sign up now at

**[supportkings.org.uk/GHH](https://supportkings.org.uk/GHH)**

   @supportkings

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