

INSIDE King's

SUMMER ISSUE 2024

The King's welcome

Supporting younger patients during
their hospital visit



Welcome



I hope you enjoy reading this, our sixth issue of Inside King's.

The first half of 2024 has been very busy for our teams who are working hard to care for patients across our hospitals.

Despite how busy we are, it is great to see teams innovating and being recognised for their exceptional service. You can read more about these awards in the Quick Reads section, overleaf.

A good example of the wide range of work that goes on at the Trust is that of our ocularists, such as Jessica Kelly, whose story can be found on page 8. Jessica makes prosthetic eyes for those patients who have had theirs removed due to illness or injury. Her work, and that of her colleagues in the Maxillofacial department, plays a huge role in restoring the confidence of patients.

Another lesser known specialist within our hospitals is Shevon Dalena, who is one of only 16 Paediatric Learning Disability Clinical Nurse Specialists in the country. She ensures young patients who have learning disabilities or autism get the best care possible and that their experience in our clinical areas are as comfortable as possible. You can read about her work on page 10.

Many roles at King's are challenging by nature and we are constantly strengthening our efforts to ensure staff are supported in their work. On page 14 you can read about clinical supervision sessions that have been put on for staff at the Chartwell Unit at Princess Royal University Hospital, where staff diagnose and care for patients with cancer. This can cause emotional and mental strain, and with the help of funding from King's College Hospital Charity, senior staff members on the ward have introduced these monthly sessions as a safe space for colleagues to process their emotions, supporting their wellbeing and ultimately equipping them to provide better patient care.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Clive Kay
Chief Executive

INSIDE
King's

Meet the team

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Design: mikelebianstudio.com

Front cover: Shevon Dalena, Paediatric Learning Disability Clinical Nurse Specialist



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.



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www.kch.nhs.uk

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

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Team King's named runner up in the 2024 HTN awards

The endoscopy service at the PRUH has been awarded runner up in the national 2024 Health Tech News (HTN) awards for Excellence in Digital Pathways.

The commendation recognises the team's work to roll out a new reminder service for patients, which has helped reduce waiting times for colonoscopy procedures. This involves a series of text messages sent to patients, reminding them of their upcoming appointment and the pre-procedure bowel preparation instructions.



Above: HTN team at PRUH

Colonoscopies are procedures where the large intestine is examined using an endoscope and are often used to help in the diagnosis of colon cancer and other bowel conditions. At the

PRUH, around 8,500 colonoscopy procedures are carried out every year.

Dr Mayur Kumar, Consultant Gastroenterologist at the Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH), said: *"This new system means that our patients feel fully informed and well-prepared when arriving for their colonoscopy, which has brought down the number of pre-assessment appointments needed by patients. Many more patients are happier and healthier as a result, making the entire patient journey much smoother."*

Brighter wards for young patients

Toni and Guy ward at King's College Hospital is now a more welcoming place for young patients thanks to an artistic makeover funded by King's College Hospital Charity.

The ward now boasts large colourful wall murals, and the corridors have become an exciting journey as exotic animals now seemingly 'jump' to life when the newly decorated doors are opened.

Painted pets also appear to offer greetings from the walls of the children's play room, dressed in space helmets surrounded by rockets and other imagery of space all designed to make children



Above: Anthony, 6 and dad Ani

laugh. Ceiling lights also depict the sky in a bright blue colour with moving digital clouds.

Lizzie Ruck, Ward Manager, said: *"We've had a fantastic response to the artwork, from children, parents*



Above: Freya, 6 and her dad from Forest Hill

and staff. It really brightens up the ward space, gives families fun things to talk about, and importantly boosts the mood of children, some of whom are unable to leave the ward during their time here due to illness."

King's physio receives Exceptional Service Award

Congratulations to Tamara Orska, Physiotherapist for Paediatrics and Cystic Fibrosis (CF) at King's, on being awarded the Exceptional Service Award by the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Cystic Fibrosis (ACPCF).

Tamara was nominated by a colleague for her tireless work with our cystic fibrosis service, and for her commitment to providing the highest quality of care for patients and their families.

As part of her role, Tamara cares for children with CF, an inherited lung disease, at King's and other



Above: Tamara Orska

hospitals across the South East of England, so travels a lot in her role.

Tamara said: *"I have had a wonderful career in the NHS, and at King's, and I hope that my work has made a difference. Thank you to my outstanding colleagues who have supported me over the years."*

Cyber-attack impacts blood testing at King's

On 3 June, a cyber-attack was carried out on Synnovis, our pathology service provider. Synnovis process blood tests on behalf of King's, Guy's and St Thomas' and a number of other NHS providers in south east London.

At the time of writing, we are still experiencing disruption to blood testing at our hospitals as a result of the incident, and regrettably, we have had to cancel some procedures and appointments as we prioritise patients who urgently need blood tests. The majority of our services are running, and patients should continue to attend appointments unless instructed otherwise.

The Trust is continuing to work closely with Synnovis, NHS England and the National Crime Agency to respond to the cyber-attack. For more information, please visit www.kch.nhs.uk, or you can call the NHS England helpline on **0345 8778967** if you are concerned about your data security following this incident.

PRUH midwife presented with national award



Above: Hannah Turner

Hannah Turner, Student Practice Facilitator at the Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH), has been recognised for her 'exceptional support, extensive knowledge, friendly demeanour' with a MAMA Midwifery Support Product of the Year Award 2024.

The MAMA Academy Student Midwifery Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements and contributions made by student midwives and other maternity professionals.

Lucy Saunders, Midwifery Practice Facilitator at the PRUH, said: *"In her role, Hannah supports and mentors student midwives throughout their development, helping them provide responsive, high quality care to women, parents-to-be and their families. She was nominated for this award by a midwifery student who highlighted Hannah's exceptional support."*

New ways of working using Epic

It has been nine months since the launch of Epic, our new electronic patient record.

Epic has enabled staff at King's to stop using paper notes to document patient care, and we have also discontinued many of the previous IT systems in use. We now have one single, secure system for our teams to get a complete overview of a patient's care.

Since the launch, work continues to fully embed Epic at King's, and to support our staff with adapting to new ways of working, but the move away from using paper has already benefited many of our teams.

Lilly Bigaruka, Unit Manager, Planned Investigation Unit at the PRUH (pictured), told us more: *"Our team has had a great experience with using Epic. We no longer need to use paper prescriptions, and I used to have seven cabinets of paper notes – we are now fully paperless thanks to Epic."*

"Communication with patients is also much more efficient as I can quickly and easily send out text messages without the need to send a letter."



Above: Lilly Bigaruka, Unit Manager, PIU, PRUH

Alongside Epic, we also launched the MyChart patient portal, a new app and online service that puts information about their own care in the hands of patients. Jamie is one of the 285,000 patients who have already signed up to MyChart, and told us: *"MyChart has been a fantastic addition to patient care. I now feel my health is in my hands."*

"The system promptly notifies me of doctor's letters and I have the ability to reschedule appointments"

17,000

members of staff have logged into Epic so far

One new

user has registered every minute since MyChart launched

1.5 million

outpatient appointments booked in Epic

945,000

medications administered using our new handheld devices linked to Epic

Information above correct as of April 2024

"MyChart has been a fantastic addition to patient care. I now feel my health is in my hands"

Jamie, MyChart user

when it's convenient for me, saving time on the phone and waiting on information via post."

Find out more about Epic and MyChart on our website:

 www.kch.nhs.uk

New skin cancer service for Beckenham Beacon patients

Specialists at Beckenham Beacon are now using high quality medical photographs to remotely assess and diagnose skin conditions, including cancer.



Above: The photography studio at Beckenham Beacon

Susan Smart, Senior Medical Photographer at Beckenham Beacon, explained how the new system works: "Once a GP refers a patient, we can help make sure they are assessed as quickly as possible.

"Rather than waiting for a face-to-face appointment, we can capture images which can be used to diagnose skin lesions and other conditions. These images are reviewed by a consultant, and within two weeks the patient is contacted with details on the outcome of the review, and instructions about what needs to happen next.

"Patients are either discharged as no treatment is needed, or invited for a follow-up face-to-face appointment or diagnostic procedure.

"This service has specific inclusion criteria, and patients who do not meet these criteria are offered a face-to-face appointment, so everyone is seen in good time."

Since the service opened at Beckenham Beacon in October 2023, more than 1,000 people across south London have been able to benefit from lower waiting times for treatment.

Nadia Bentoua, 44, from Bromley, was referred to the teledermatology service after she told her GP about a small mark on her face.

She said: "I knew how important it is to get these things checked. I went along to Beckenham Beacon where the team took lots of medical photographs, and three days later, I received a call from a consultant, who explained that I needed follow-up treatment."

Nadia underwent a biopsy which confirmed she had basal cell carcinoma, one of the most common forms of skin cancer.

She added: "Because of the quality of the photos taken by the service, the consultant could tell without even seeing me that I needed a biopsy. I then had Mohs surgery (a procedure where thin layers of skin are removed one layer at a time), which was more invasive, but following that I had the brilliant news that the cancer had been successfully removed. I am so grateful that I was able to get the treatment I needed."

Iosif Bakare, Senior Medical Photographer at Beckenham Beacon, added: *"This new service will help us spot dangerous skin conditions as early as possible, and potentially save lives."*

Eyes in focus

Susan White had been wearing contact lenses for 30 years without any problems, but one day she woke up with her left eye very swollen.

Her local optician sent her straight to the Emergency Eye Service at Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup where attempts were made to get the infection under control, including minor operations. However, the situation rapidly got worse, leaving Susan with no sight in her left eye, and unable to sleep due to the pain.

In what Susan describes as a very emotional time, she then agreed to having her left eye removed.

"I lost all of my confidence; my bright blue eyes were my best features," she explained.

"I had to deal with unpleasant comments and people would stare at me. It was my lowest point."

In rare cases such as this, patients sometimes need to have their eye removed during a painless procedure carried out under general anaesthetic, and this is what happened to Susan when it became clear that all other treatment options had been explored.

Patients like Susan are supported throughout this process, and given the option of having an artificial eye custom made for them if they choose.



Above: Ocularist Jessica Kelly

"I was assured by Mr Farooq (my surgeon) that after everything calmed down, my prosthetic eye would look as good as the eye I lost. I must say I was very unsure it would look normal."

Susan was sent for an appointment at the maxillofacial clinic at King's College Hospital where ocularist Jessica Kelly first took impressions of her eye socket to make her a new eye.

Jessica, who is originally from Camberwell, undertook a year of training to become an ocularist after working as a dental technician for

more than a decade. She undertakes the whole process from start to finish to give a patient a new eye.

"You do have to have a lot of empathy, handle the situation in a sympathetic way and be caring as well and understanding," she said.

"At their first or second appointment with us we take an impression of the eye socket and then mix up a liquid alginate (a type of gum made from algae) and use a syringe to squeeze the material through to take an impression of the eye socket."

From this initial impression, a wax mould is created which can then be put in place to check everything looks correct in terms of size and shape.

"Nothing can be rushed; we have to be very precise with everything to make sure that we get a good result," said Jessica.

"From the final wax mould we take another impression using a different material and then process this into hard acrylic which is trimmed away until it's just right."

A high quality image is taken of the patient's good eye which is printed out and propped up the ocularist's work station, where they paint the prosthetic eye by hand.

"This sometimes can take a very long time because everybody's eyes are quite unique, and they have lots of different colours and patterns going through them. I don't mind how long it takes me, as long as I'm producing a good result for the patient."



Above: Jessica holds several prosthetic eyes she has finished painting

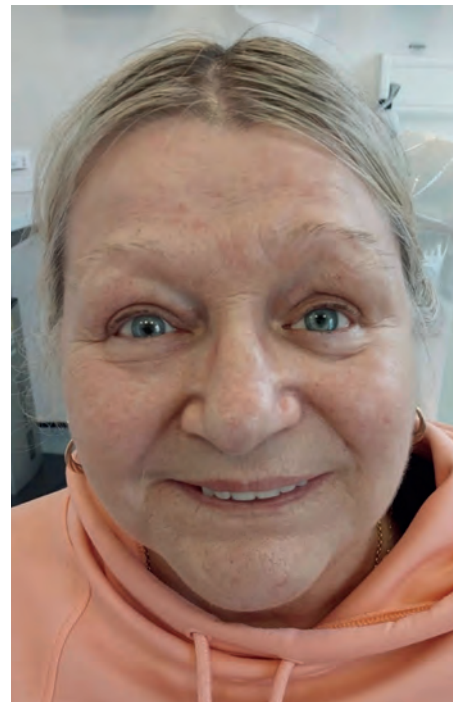
"I had to deal with unpleasant comments and people would stare at me. It was my lowest point"

Susan White

Once the eye is 'finished', it will be sealed in a clear acrylic, which will create the effect of having a lens. The patient typically will have their new eye in place after six appointments.

"On my first appointment to see Jessica I was very nervous as I didn't know what to expect," said Susan.

"Because my eyes are very light blue I worried that the left eye would look different to my right. But Jessica was very good and put me at ease. She explained blue eyes are the hardest colour to get right but she would do her very best to get the colour right."



Above: Susan with her new eye

"When it was time to see my new eye, I cried when I looked in the mirror. Jessica's work was spot on; it was amazing and my confidence was right back."

"I would like to thank Jessica for her amazing job, as well as Dr Farooq at Queen Mary's Sidcup and the other doctors and nurses involved."

Jessica said the best part of her job is when a she gets a positive reaction like this.

"This is the best part of the job for me because I see how much of a difference I've made to somebody," said Jessica.

"It's so rewarding and fulfilling for me and I don't think I could find another job that I would love doing as much as I love doing this one."

Making patients comfortable

Shevon Dalena is one of only 16 children's learning disability nurses based in hospitals across the UK.

As a Paediatric Learning Disability Clinical Nurse Specialist, Shevon works with children under the age of 18 who have a learning disability and or autism to ensure they get the best quality care when they come into hospital.

"We know that people with learning disabilities have a much shorter life expectancy than the general population, dying on average 23 to 27 years younger," said Shevon.

"They need better access to health care and I'm here to advocate for them, help plan for them coming into hospital and support them while they're here.

"I can get involved in any part of the patient journey; it could be as soon as they access hospital care, it can be that the patient or their parents contact me; my number is all out there on the parents' forums and on the posters in the wards as well."

"Patients come through our hospitals each year who may need extra assistance. This may involve things like putting patients with needle



“It has been really useful to meet with the staff in similar roles and get some peer support.”

Shevon Dalena

phobias through desensitisation programs to help them go through the experience.

“Desensitisation could involve things like visits to surgical areas or to blood testing areas beforehand, and that’s just in order to help someone deal with the experience of having a blood test,” Shevon explained.

A major part of Shevon’s role also involves educating staff and giving them the tools and knowledge to be able to support this patient group.

As well as educating frontline healthcare staff, Shevon also works with security staff on de-escalation tactics for patients who may not react well to the hospital setting and its procedures.

“They appreciate that there’s someone to support them and listen to them,” Shevon said.

“It could be the first time that their child is coming in to a hospital and it’s helpful for them to have somebody that understands the impact that may have on the person with a learning disability and or autism.

“The other thing that I often see is parents who come in and actually this might be the first time that they, or healthcare professionals have noticed that the child may have a learning disability and or autism.

“So sometimes I have to have difficult conversations with parents to say that this is something that

we’ve noticed. But often that almost comes as a relief to them; they tell me they had thought there was something wrong with their parenting, but absolutely it’s not. So there’s a whole process that parents have when their child is diagnosed with a very complex condition.”

As Shevon’s role is so rare, she and the other 15 people who do the same role meet up every three months to share good practice.

“It has been really useful to meet with the others and get some peer support,” she said. Shevon said she is happy in her role, saying it was an exciting one that varied from day to day.

“I just love the patients, the children that I work with,” she said. “they are so resilient. They teach me a lot every single day. They’re really inspiring and they just bring a whole new meaning to what it can be like to live with a very complex, and sometimes a life limiting health condition and still just have the joys of life.”



Above: Shevon and Project SEARCH intern William Frewer give a talk to staff



Brainwaves: Spotlight on King's neurosurgery team



Above: Members of the neurosurgery team at King's, (L-R): Jose Pedro Lavrador, Ranjeev S Bhangoo, Prof Keyoumars Ashkan, Francesco Vergani, Prajwal Ghimire

The neurosurgery team at King's College Hospital treat thousands of patients with complex neurosurgical conditions every year.

They care for adults and children with brain and spinal tumours, conditions including Parkinson's disease, tremors, epilepsy, hydrocephalus, brain injury,

developmental anomalies, stroke and bleeds on the brain.

The team includes neurosurgeons, physiotherapists, pain relief doctors, neuroradiologists, clinical nurse specialists, and therapists.

Mr Ranjeev Bhangoo is a Consultant Neurosurgeon, and Clinical Director for the service at King's. He said: "Each one of us

has an important part to play in a patient's journey on the road to recovery. The team works around the clock to deliver critical treatments to patients at one of the most anxious and vulnerable times of their life."

King's is a major regional centre for neurosurgery care and rehabilitation, providing specialist treatment to patients from south-

east London and Kent, as well as receiving referrals from across the UK and Europe.

At the forefront of pioneering clinical trials, King's is also involved in developing new treatments and ground-breaking surgical techniques. King's neurosurgeon Professor Keyoumars Ashkan said: *"As well as providing compassionate and holistic care, we want to ensure our patients have the latest innovative and leading treatments. King's is involved with a number of clinical trials and research opportunities: without these, new and better treatments would not be possible."*

Recently, a vaccine trialled at King's College Hospital was shown to be effective in extending the lives of patients with an aggressive type of brain cancer. Professor Ashkan added: *"These findings were the result of an 11-year worldwide study, and the results offer fresh hope to patients battling with glioblastoma."*

"Another big area of our research is using implantable devices to correct abnormal brain function. We have been using these to treat movement disorders for decades but now we are also looking at treatment options for psychiatric disorders, such as drug and alcohol addiction, where potentially we could make a global impact on disease burden and the associated costs."



Above: Mr Bassel Zebian, Consultant Neurosurgeon

Innovation has also driven the work of a team of King's neurosurgeons and fetal medicine specialists, who care for the Trust's youngest patients. In 2019, King's became the first centre in the UK to carry out fetoscopic (keyhole) surgery on babies with spina bifida while they are still in their mother's womb. Until recently, women carrying a baby with spina bifida who decided to continue with their pregnancy could choose to repair the hole in their baby's back after birth or opt for more invasive surgery.

Simon and Emily Ellis's youngest son, Austin, was diagnosed with spina bifida prior to birth, and underwent pioneering fetoscopic (keyhole) surgery at King's College Hospital, carried out by Bassel Zebian and the Neurosurgery team.

Simon Ellis said: *"We can't thank Bassel Zebian and the team at*

"Only a handful of centres around the world have the required expertise to perform surgery using a fetoscope"

Mr Bassel Zebian

King's enough for the care they've given us. Austin is doing really well, and doing a lot of things we never thought were even possible."

Mr Bassel Zebian, Consultant Neurosurgeon at King's, explained: *"Only a handful of centres around the world have the required expertise to perform surgery using a fetoscope. This is a pioneering technique which can reduce the risks to the mother and future pregnancies whilst still ensuring maximal benefit for the baby."*

"It is a true privilege to be able to provide such a service and I am indebted to the whole team at King's who have ensured the success of the fetoscopic neurosurgical service – which is the only one of its kind in the UK – in the best interests of the patients we serve."

Creating a supportive culture with clinical supervision

To provide the best care for our patients, we need to provide the best care for our staff. At the Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH), the Chartwell Unit is a positive example of this in action.

Staff in the Chartwell Unit at the PRUH diagnose and care for a wide range of cancer patients, supporting them and their families through every aspect of their treatment journey.

The team work hard to provide the very best care for their patients, but it can be a difficult environment to work in, both emotionally and mentally, with staff facing complex and challenging situations with every shift. Dealing with these emotions can be difficult to navigate, especially without someone to talk to.

"As a team, we manage these situations well, but the aftermath can often be challenging to process on an individual level," said Margaret Finnegan, Head of Nursing Speciality Medicine.

Chartwell Unit

To help support staff, the Chartwell Unit has developed an initiative to provide its team with the support they need.



Above: Rex Logronio, Healthcare Assistant



Above: Jade Cummins-Floyd, Senior Staff Nurse, Chemotherapy Day Unit

With the help of funding from King's College Hospital Charity, senior staff members on the ward introduced monthly clinical supervision sessions for all members of staff. They were designed as a safe space for staff to process their emotions, supporting their wellbeing and ultimately equipping them to provide better patient care.

"As a staff nurse working in cancer, I can express my worries and anxieties freely without judgement. Caring for our patients can be the greatest privilege and supervision helps us do the very best for them."
Staff Nurse, Chartwell Unit

Finding time for busy staff to attend the sessions can be challenging, especially when someone always needs to be on duty during all hours of the day. But from the get-go, the senior team ensured that every staff member had an equal chance to attend, helping to prioritise sessions alongside various work duties.

Their efforts paid off, as clinical sessions were well attended throughout the two-year period, with staff regularly looking forward to them every month.

Senior staff members ensured that the wards and clinics received sufficient additional staff support during the sessions, alleviating concerns about workload and removing any barriers to attending. *"Each month staff look forward to these sessions and*



Left: Margaret Finnegan, Head of Nursing (Speciality Medicine)

are eager to attend with some team members wanting to come in purely for the sessions. Our supervisor is attentive, warm and patient, she creates an atmosphere in which we all feel comfortable and accepted irrespective of our role, position or status."

Making an impact

The results speak for themselves. After two years of the programme, the Chartwell Unit saw improved staff retention, wellbeing and morale. There was even an increase in the number of staff being promoted to internal positions within the team, a strong indicator that staff were motivated and thriving in their roles.

But beyond the numbers, there was a profound culture shift too. The group sessions brought about a

strong sense of cohesion, belonging and support within the team. Staff now leave work each day reflecting on their shift and checking in with each other. Thanks to clinical supervision, the deep connection and support that staff have for one another has become part of their daily routines.

Shining bright

In September 2023 the Chartwell Unit won an award for teamwork and compassion in the King's Stars 2023 Quarterly Awards. It was an exceptionally proud moment, highlighting the incredible support they show to their patients and each other. One nominator said:

"They come together as one team to provide support to each other and are always willing to assist and cross cover the areas no matter where their base is. "Team Chartwell", your hard work and commitment have not gone unnoticed, you truly exemplify what it is to be a 'kind, respectful team."

"Talking as a team openly about how we are feeling and how some patients' stories affect us is extremely beneficial as we are all in this together. It brings us together as a team... I personally look forward to our monthly sessions as I feel this is a huge weight lifted off my shoulders."

The great hospital hike 2024



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