

INSIDE King's

AUTUMN ISSUE 2025

Streaming success

Netflix series showcases trauma network



Welcome



I hope you enjoy reading this autumn issue of Inside King's.

As the nights start to draw in, we can reflect back on a busy summer for our hospitals.

During this time our staff have continued to be recognised with numerous honours and awards from national and international organisations. We were also pleased to be named in the top 20 most

improved NHS Trusts for aspects of the urgent and emergency care we provide.

The cover story of this edition of Inside King's on page eight takes us behind the scenes of *Critical: Between Life and Death*, a new series on Netflix, for which extensive filming took place at King's.

For our staff, it is a rare opportunity to how patients progress once they have been stabilised and treated for their initial injuries. In many cases, we see patients go on to recover, and return to their normal lives, which is superb to see, and inspiring for colleagues involved in every aspect of their journey.

Further along in the magazine you can explore the wide range of work carried out by our Maxillofacial Services and Dental Technical Laboratory. The team, along with Professor Kathy Fan, Consultant Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon, were recently praised in the media for the extensive work they carried out to help rebuild the face of the Bishop of Southwark. The Right Reverend Christopher Chessun had been in a taxi which stopped suddenly, causing extensive facial injuries when his head collided with the inside of the vehicle. You can read more about the team's excellent work on page 12.

Rounding off the magazine is a look at the work of King's College Hospital Charity to fund research into ageing with sickle cell on page 14.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition and thank you again for your support and interest in King's.

Clive Kay
Chief Executive

INSIDE
King's

Meet the team

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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.bsky.social



@KingsCollegeHospital



@KingsCollegeHospital



www.kch.nhs.uk

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



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Contents

04

QUICK READS

The latest news and events from our hospitals

06

SPREAD A SMILE

Meet a charity that makes children's hospital stays happier

07

CARING FOR CARERS

We talk to the team that support those that care for patients

08

BEHIND THE SCENES

Our major trauma team features in a new Netflix series

10

SAFE AND SECURE

We look into the work of the King's security team

12

BRINGING THINGS TO A HEAD

We explore the work of our maxillofacial laboratory

14

AGEING WELL WITH SICKLE CELL

A new project to boost quality of life for those with sickle cell

Choose Kindness: supporting safer, more respectful care at King's

King's has launched a new campaign, **Choose Kindness**, to help tackle violence, abuse, and aggression in our hospitals.

Violence and abuse can have a lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of staff and affect their ability to care for patients. Our hospitals should be safe, respectful places for everyone – patients, visitors, and staff alike.

Tracey Carter, Chief Nurse and Executive Director of Midwifery at King's, said: "Our Choose Kindness



campaign is a clear and visible stand against unacceptable behaviour – and a reminder that kindness must go both ways. We are committed to protecting our staff and creating a safer, more respectful environment for everyone who comes to our hospitals."

You will see campaign posters and messages across our hospital sites over the coming weeks. At King's, we are proud of the care and compassion shown by our staff every day. By choosing kindness, together we can make our hospitals safer, more welcoming places for all.

Team King's shortlisted for seven national awards

Staff members and teams across the Trust have been recognised as finalists in the **Nursing Times Workforce Awards 2025**.

The Nursing Times Workforce Awards celebrate and honour the incredible contributions made by NHS colleagues in strengthening the nursing and midwifery workforce.

Tracey Carter, Chief Nurse and Executive Director of Midwifery at the Trust, said: "At Team King's, we work hard to ensure everyone feels valued and has the opportunity to thrive, and it is wonderful that the Nursing Times Workforce Awards have recognised the commitment and dedication of our brilliant staff. We are so proud of our successful nominees, and wish them good luck for the awards ceremony on 19 November 2025."

King's finalists in the 2025 awards include:

Minija Joseph, Clinical Lead for Theatres:

Diversity and Inclusion Champion of the Year

Hidden Severe Mental Illness (SMI) Team:

Diversity and Inclusion Champion of the Year

SpineCare Clinical Training for Nursing Professionals:

Best Workplace for Learning and Development

SpineLine: Nurse Led support for perioperative neurosurgery spine patients:

Best Social Responsibility Programme

ASM Transition Programme:

Best UK Employer of the Year for Nursing Staff

ASM Transition Programme:

Best International Recruitment Experience

Minija Joseph, Clinical Lead for Theatres:

Overseas Nurse of the Year

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Transformation Programme:

Best Employer for Diversity and Inclusion

New app helps families stay connected to premature babies

A new video messaging app has launched at King's College Hospital and Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH) to support families who aren't always able to be with their baby.

The app, which has been funded through King's College Hospital Charity, allows staff on neonatal intensive care units to send regular photo and video updates securely to families, allowing them to see play and therapy sessions, baths and feeding times. Parents and families can also use the app to ask questions and receive important updates about their baby's progress.



Above: Twins Tennessee and Tallulah

Jade Clark, from Petts Wood, has been using the app to receive updates on her twin daughters Tennessee and Tallulah, who were born prematurely at 32 weeks, and are receiving care at the neonatal unit at PRUH. Jade said: *"Seeing photos of them both doing well is a joy, and gives extra reassurance when we can't be there."*

King's and AccessAble launch access guides to support patients and visitors

King's has officially launched a series of Detailed Access Guides for King's College Hospital and Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH).

The Trust has worked with AccessAble to provide detailed information for all of our departments, wards and services. These guides are now available via the King's page on the AccessAble website, helping disabled people and their families to plan their visits with greater ease and confidence.



AccessAble

Over 150 Detailed Access Guides have been produced, with facts, figures and photographs on all accessibility considerations including – but not limited to – ramp access, Blue Badge parking bays, lighting levels and rest areas.

Project SEARCH intern gets job at PRUH



Above: Jonathan Pang

The partnership between King's and charity DFN

Project SEARCH has resulted in another young intern gaining employment at the Trust. Jonathan Pang was one of 12 interns who recently graduated from Project SEARCH, which provides work experience for young adults with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Jonathan celebrated completing the internship scheme with a full-time paid role at the Trust as a pharmacy runner at Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH), becoming the fourteenth intern to join King's in paid employment since Project SEARCH started at the Trust in 2021. *"My confidence grew whilst doing Project SEARCH,"* Jonathan said: *"I really enjoyed meeting new people and I loved working with my job coaches from Bromley Mencap, who were really friendly and supportive."*

Spread a Smile – Bringing joy to seriously ill children and young people at King's

Spread a Smile is a charity which has supported seriously ill children and young people at King's College Hospital since 2020.



Above: Louise from Spread a Smile during 'Play in Hospital' week

Their talented team of entertainers – including singers, magicians, therapy dogs, artists and poets – make regular visits to the wards, visiting young patients at their bedsides, and providing much needed moments of distraction, fun and happiness.

Balloon modeller, Louise, is one of the regular Spread a Smile visitors to the hospital and is always a firm favourite, creating incredible balloon arches to support special days such as Play in Hospital Week, along with individual creations for the children and young people she meets on the wards.

Louise said it was a real privilege to visit children and young people at King's. *"When I meet a patient, I invite them to ask for a balloon*

"It's brilliant to see the wonder on a child's face as a simple balloon or two is transformed into something special that they have requested"

Louise from Spread a Smile

sculpture they would like," she said.

"I have a 'menu' of ideas to inspire them such as spiderman, a mermaid, unicorn, dinosaur, princess, tiger etc, but I am open to trying anything and often suggest they challenge me with an idea! This usually builds the excitement as they begin to think of something they think would be impossible to make. I always take on the challenge, and there aren't many things I haven't had a go at making.


"I'm so proud of my work as a Spread a Smile entertainer. We bring distraction and fun for patients and



Above: A young patient with her balloon model

families who spend so much of their time with very little to do, apart from meeting medical professionals and having serious conversations. The entertainers come along with a completely different and new energy, helping people to escape that "hospital feeling" – even if it's for a short while.

"It's brilliant to see the wonder on a child's face as a simple balloon or two is transformed into something special that they have requested. The parents and carers love it too – it's a moment of escape where they can forget the severity of what is happening to them."

To find out more about Spread a Smile and their work spreading joy and happiness to seriously ill children and young people in hospital, visit:  spreadasmile.org

Support for carers

Carers play a vital role in the ongoing health and wellbeing of patients, acting as a go-between with clinical staff to ensure patient carers get the support they need.

To ensure carers themselves get the support they need, Carers Hub Lambeth have embedded specialist staff at King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' who are based in the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) offices. They support carers who live in or care for someone who lives in Lambeth or Southwark.

"A lot of people wouldn't identify themselves as carers and it might be that person becomes a carer as a result of a particular hospital visit, or their caring role may change as a result of it," said Jen McAlister, Hospital Carers' Lead.

"Carers have a unique insight into the patient's particular needs and can play an important role in a patient's recovery and ongoing wellbeing.

"However, initially they may not feel confident to raise concerns, or request what is needed for them to be confident enough to take care of their loved one following a hospital discharge.

"We work with these carers to offer and signpost them to the support they need - whether that's practical

support with finances and housing issues, or things like house cleaning and repairs. We also offer emotional support and can help with other referrals and accessing things like food and fuel banks."

Carers' Hub Lambeth also put together educational resources for hospital staff and clinicians to help them identify carers so that they can support them and understand their rights.

"A good outcome for us is that the carer feels involved and that their voice has been heard," said Jen.

"Whilst we support carers in Lambeth and Southwark we welcome conversations with carers from other boroughs so that we can signpost them to the right places."

Jen previously worked in the corporate world but was inspired to join the Carer's Hub after being a carer for her mum.

"I had some difficult experiences in healthcare settings so it is nice to be able to help people that are facing similar challenges," Jen explained.



Above: Erem and Jen from the Carer's Hub

"A good outcome for us is that the carer feels involved and that their voice has been heard"

Jen McAlister

"I love the work and I find it very meaningful."

The Carer's Hub project started in January 2024 and the team is now available during business hours, Monday to Friday.

Staff can refer a carer to us for information and support by contacting:

✉ connect@carershub.org.uk

Trauma teams back on screen

The work of King's trauma teams is being broadcast worldwide in a new Netflix series – *Critical: Between Life and Death*.

The series covers compelling, real-life stories of seriously injured patients and the highly skilled and compassionate clinical teams who come together to provide innovative treatment and life-saving care.

The filming took place over three weeks across the London Major Trauma System, with 40 cameras recording in its network of 39 hospitals and trauma centres led by Major Trauma Centres at King's College Hospital together with St Mary's, The Royal London, St George's and 35 Major Trauma Units across the city.

"It is really a 'King's show' due to the huge amount of cases they filmed that revolve around King's," said Mr Aswin Vasireddy, Consultant Orthopaedic Trauma Surgeon, who appears in the series.

"We have had filming in the hospital before but Netflix was on another level; the quality of the final product was amazing. Even though this is my day job, when I watched the



Above: A screenshot from the Netflix series showing trauma surgery at King's

trailer for the series I had to hold my breath; the way they presented the programme was quite thrilling.

"I can't help but think what a great reputational boost this is for King's as well as being a potentially useful tool for medical students when they are doing their trauma modules."

Dr Lalarukh Asim, an Emergency Medicine Consultant at King's, said her high pressure work in the King's Emergency Department (ED) was undisturbed by the film crews as they captured her team caring for very sick patients.

"I was obviously aware of the film

"It was shot beautifully, the music was very fitting and it was lovely seeing the stories coming together."

Mr Aswin Vasireddy



Above: Mr Aswin Vasireddy, Consultant Orthopaedic Trauma Surgeon

"It was shot beautifully, the music was very fitting and it was lovely seeing the stories coming together."

"We are used to seeing our patients for a relatively short period of time in a clinical environment so it was great to see their whole story play out and to see them back living their normal lives afterwards, having recovered."

"The production team did a great job of showing the amazing work that the trauma system does and the job that I love."

Since the first episodes went online, surgeon Mr Ibraheim El-Daly has been contacted by relatives in Egypt and the United States to say they have seen him on their TV screens.

"King's is now worldwide!" said Ibraheim, Consultant Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon.

"I have been filmed working before for '24 Hours in A&E' and 'Emergency' and I quite enjoy the experience."

"It's an opportunity to showcase how we function together as a unit and it's wonderful to be able to see the patient's whole journey from beginning to end."

"I love operating and King's is my home. I'm proud to have been able to participate in this great production which has so amazingly showcased the work we do as a team."

As to whether there should be a second series, Ibraheim was unequivocal.

"Bring it on!" he said.

All episodes of *Critical: Between Life and Death* are available to watch on Netflix.



crews due to the extra people and equipment but they were very respectful and their recording didn't feel intrusive at all," she said.

"I have only seen bits of the programme as I had to turn away for bits that I was in! But my husband and mum watched it and of course the kids told all their friends about it."

Safe and secure

The security team at King's College Hospital has a wide range of responsibilities, from keeping staff and visitors safe to managing the helipad on top of the 10-storey Ruskin Wing.



Above: Ian Taylor (front right) with members of the King's security team

The security team at King's is made up of a dedicated team of thirty-two security professionals that operate across four teams, ensuring the safety and security of patients, visitors, and staff 24/7. This frontline team is supported by two Operational Security Managers, a Violence Reduction & Security Training Manager, and three administrators.

"The role of the Security Officer is one of both protection and support, providing escorts, welcoming visitors with warmth, offering guidance to those in need, and providing reassurance to patients, including those experiencing challenging behaviours," explained Ian Taylor, Head of Security & Helideck Operations, who leads the team.

"At times, their responsibilities shift to urgent and high-pressure situations, such as responding to fire alarms, assisting staff under duress, or intervening to prevent harm or persons leaving that we have a lawful duty to keep safe, or who may have committed crimes."

Day-to-day, an on-duty officer in

the control room in the Hambleton Wing has oversight of more than 1,500 internal and external cameras across the site. This officer acts as the eyes and ears of seven other security staff around the campus who will be either on static duties at busy areas like the Emergency Department or conducting roving patrols in their familiar uniforms and high-visibility yellow protective vests.

Another officer serves as the dedicated Helideck Officer, available 24/7 to receive inbound helicopters, often carrying critically injured major trauma patients.

Communicating effectively is at the core of the Security Officer's role and being well-trained in conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques – with some staff now nationally accredited trainers – they host regular workshops with clinical staff to share these skills.

"Security Officers are trained to de-escalate conflict with skill and compassion," explained Ian. "They may remain with a patient for many hours to ensure safety, sometimes easing tensions with a simple cup of tea, a sandwich, or even joining a child in a game or colouring activity to help them feel more at ease during a difficult hospital stay."

"Our security training is of a high standard, equipping our officers to handle even the most demanding and complex situations with confidence and professionalism."

"The work isn't about glamour, it's about purpose. It's about protecting patients, supporting colleagues, and making a real difference every single day"

Ian Taylor



Above: Helideck Officer Oniel Watson oversees a takeoff

"This commitment to excellence is consistently reflected in the feedback we receive, not only from colleagues, but also from patients, visitors, and even police officers."

Ian started his career in the army and then worked as part of the security team at Harrods, joining King's in 2002.

"Working in a hospital security team was a different world, with differing standards, a lack of formal training in those early days, and a very different approach to managing people and situations," Ian explained.

"I quickly came to realise that joining King's was one of the best decisions I've ever made. Here,

the work isn't about glamour, it's about purpose. It's about protecting patients, supporting colleagues, and making a real difference every single day.

"King's has given me not only a career, but a sense of belonging, purpose, and pride, and I can truly say I enjoy working here."

"Here at King's we in the security team feel valued, listened to, and given a place at the table when discussions affect our service. That sense of inclusion and support is vital to team morale, and it's one of the reasons we receive hundreds of applications whenever we advertise a single vacancy, and why our staff retention remains strong."

The laboratory where science meets art

The Maxillofacial Services and Dental Technical Laboratory at King's is said to be a place where science meets art.

Carrying out dental, jaw, facial and head reconstructions, and the creation of a wide range of prostheses, involves a variety of skills, technology and equipment.

Prostheses – which are artificial devices used to replace diseased or missing body parts – can be produced using innovative 3D software and printing, as well as hydraulically operated mechanical presses. But many patients rely on the expertise of staff who often hand paint artificial body parts – such as eyeballs – so they perfectly match the patient for which they are intended. The goal is that patients leave hospital with as close to the same appearance as they had when they came in.

Dealing primarily with the mouth, jaws, face, and neck, the team – based on the top floor of the Dental Institute at King's College Hospital – also deal with other parts of the body.

The lab also supports 120 cranial reconstructions a year, which are for patients who have lost part of their skull through trauma or disease. 3D software is used to preplan the



Above: The Maxillofacial Services and Dental Technical Laboratory team

operation and design the cranial plate, which involves taking a flat titanium disc and pressing it into shape using a powerful hydraulic press.

Gráinne Hamze, Head of Maxillofacial Services & Dental Technical at King's, started her journey into this field of healthcare by accident, when she was working as a nurse in Newry, Northern Ireland.

"There was someone making dentures next to me and I thought it was fascinating!" she said.

Having completed a Masters in Reconstructive Surgery, Gráinne ran her own maxillofacial lab in Dublin for several years before she saw a job advertised at King's and started here in 2013.

The biggest development since then has been the adoption of 3D computer software to enable pre-operative planning and prosthesis design, with King's being one of the first to adopt this technology in the UK around 10 years ago.



Above: Gráinne Hamze works on a titanium plate for a patient

"Technology has really turned everything on its head in terms of the way we do things," Gráinne explained.

"The patient experience has improved massively; we can show them exactly what we are going to do using the computer."

"We can also do the pre-operative planning so that the procedure goes smoothly."

The team have even secured the

services of a biomedical engineer to work in the lab to keep King's at the cutting edge of pre-operative and prosthesis design.

"3D design is really the future and having an experienced professional doing this full-time will really improve the outcome for our patients," Gráinne said.

"It won't just benefit the lab but we have seen the work other hospitals are doing designing replacement heart valves for cardiac surgeries, and

"The patient experience has improved massively; we can show them exactly what we are going to do using the computer"

Gráinne Hamze

I think we could do the same."

One high profile patient helped by the lab is Christopher Chessun, the Bishop of Southwark, who is back serving the community after surgeons rebuilt his face after he suffered severe facial injuries in a car accident.

In surgery, the facial bones had to be moved back into the correct position and then seven titanium plates and a number of screws were used to hold them in place, along with material to reconstruct the floor of the eye socket.

"Some of our patients have often had a terrible ordeal and could teach us all some lessons on how to be appreciative of life and its blessings," said Gráinne.

"They come to us following trauma and it's our role to help them through the rehabilitation process and help them to feel whole again. I find it a brilliant job and so rewarding."



Above: Technicians in the Dental Technical Laboratory work on dentures

Revolutionising sickle cell care: a new era for ageing patients at King's

We spoke with Dr Arne de Kreuk, Consultant Haematologist, about a new programme being championed at King's, which the team hope will improve life for older sickle cell patients.

A new vision for sickle cell care

The groundbreaking project 'Ageing Well with Sickle Cell' sets out to pave the way for a brighter future for patients with sickle cell disease aged 35 years and older, who often face a range of challenges as they age, with the goal of improving their physical, mental, social and emotional health.

Building on King's long-standing commitment to patient-led research, the team is working to identify and address what matters most to people living with sickle cell disorder to establish the best pathways of care for them. The project aims to identify and understand their concerns, improve their quality of life, and support them and their loved ones to plan for their futures.

Bringing the project to fruition, researchers at King's and King's Health Partners Haematology are exploring how to improve care and raise awareness of the challenges patients face, centering patients and their perspectives at the centre of the research.



Above: Dr Arne de Kreuk at the launch event for Ageing Well With Sickle Cell

Dr Arne de Kreuk, King's Haematology Consultant and Clinical Director for Ageing Well with Sickle Cell, spoke to us about the project and the stigma that has long faced sickle cell patients: *"The Ageing Well with Sickle Cell project aims to improve wellbeing and quality of life for this group, because we strongly believe that health and wellbeing are correlated"*, Dr de Kreuk said.

"It's a holistic project. We want to understand what truly matters to patients and how they can be more involved in managing their health. For example, there was a Swedish study that showed that patients administering their own dialysis had better results, so we want to explore factors like agency and other emotional factors that can improve outcomes, and not just the medical healthcare element."



Left: Dr Arne de Kreuk at the launch event for Ageing Well With Sickle Cell with John James, CEO of the Sickle Cell Society

The hidden toll of living with sickle cell

Sickle cell disease causes chronic pain, fatigue, anaemia, and serious complications such as strokes, blindness, and organ damage – deeply affecting quality of life.

“Over time, as people with sickle cell age, permanent damage can be caused, and some patients experience joint damage akin to that of someone in their 70s or 80s – decades before their time”, Dr de Kreuk added.

For many years, sickle cell research has been underfunded and the realities of the suffering of many have been ignored and dismissed.

Sickle cell is predominantly experienced by people of African or Caribbean descent, as well as those from South East Asian backgrounds. Historic discrimination against those with the disease has made life even harder for those who have it.

“There is good data to suggest that ethnic minorities receive substandard care – and this disparity extends to research”, Dr de Kreuk explained. “Sickle cell has historically been underfunded and under-researched compared to other conditions.

“Furthermore, many people with sickle cell may not want to go to healthcare facilities because of the stigma. Harmful stereotypes – such as assumptions around substance misuse – have long influenced how people with sickle cell are treated in some healthcare settings. Though it’s extremely rare in London hospitals and places like King’s where we treat a large number of sickle cell patients, there can be the perception that people are exaggerating their symptoms”, Dr de Kreuk added.

Leading the way at King’s

King’s hosts the largest cohorts of patients with sickle cell disease in the UK and the third largest in Europe. It currently treats over 5,000 sickle cell patients.

An emerging group of older adults with sickle cell disorder are now accessing more health services. Their needs are evolving – and care must evolve with them.

The average life expectancy for these patients in the UK is still over 20-30 years shorter compared to the general population.

These patients often miss out on important healthcare interventions designed for older people with frailty and multiple co-morbidities since current pathways do not account for individuals with similar needs at a much younger age, as with sickle cell.

With King’s treating one of the greatest concentrations of people living with sickle cell disease in Europe, this work is vital to our local community. By highlighting the lived experience of ageing with sickle cell, King’s is changing care – and confronting the systemic neglect that has shaped it for decades.

Donations make projects like this possible. Please donate today to support the hospitals’ highest priority needs: supportkings.org.uk

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Team King's



Team King's



For more information or to report an incident of violence or abuse against our staff, patients or visitors, visit www.kch.nhs.uk/choose-kindness/ or scan the QR code



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