



# Health Matters

Keeping you informed about the news and views of Blackpool Teaching Hospitals



## Our little heroes

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## Welcome from the Chief Executive

HELLO and welcome to your latest edition of our Health Matters newsletter.



This week we have been remembering those who gave their lives for their country and we have been proud to pay our respects at the poppy memorials at both Blackpool Victoria Hospital and Clifton Hospital.

Thousands have come in to see the tribute in the Main Entrance at Blackpool, including 95-year-old Leonard Curran who was visibly overwhelmed by the memorial. His story can be read on Page 6 of this magazine.

We are also delighted to report that Victoria Hospital has broken all national results for its environment, food and facilities in the latest site assessment.

Carried out annually, these appraisals are carried out by a patient panel who look at how the hospital is providing the best non-clinical services for all its patients.

Our neonatal team is excited to be hosting a Little Heroes party to celebrate the success of premature babies who have been cared for on the Unit during the past 10 years.

**Wendy Swift,**  
Chief Executive

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**Ready to mark World Prematurity Day is student nurse Lauren Sinnott. Our front cover picture is of Advanced Neonatal Practitioner, Liz Morrison. Story — Page 3**

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# Honouring the little neonatal heroes

NURSES at Blackpool's neonatal ward are pulling out all the stops to celebrate their little heroes. As part of World Prematurity Day, staff at Blackpool Victoria Hospital are putting on a party to honour the babies who have been cared for on the Neonatal Unit in the last 10 years.

Neonatal Lead Nurse, Catherine Nash, said: "We want to recognise what these children have achieved. We are celebrating how far they have come in life. For them a big journey started with small and uncertain steps.

"These babies have achieved so much, they are our little heroes. We also wanted to have the opportunity to thank the parents and families for their ongoing support."

The party will be held at Blackpool Football Club on World Prematurity Day, November 17, and nearly 150 babies and children have already booked their places.

Worldwide more than one in ten babies are born premature and for babies it can mean the biggest fight of their lives starts the moment they are born.

Every year Blackpool Neonatal Unit cares for more than 200 premature babies, with smallest ever weighing a tiny 15oz. Some of the babies are born up to 16 weeks early and, for these babies in particular, it is a long and difficult journey for the whole family before their baby is finally ready to be discharged home.

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Neonatal hero, Grace Williamson, pictured as a baby on the unit and now as a bright, happy, healthy four-year-old

Having a premature baby can be a massive emotional strain for families and the party will be an opportunity for parents to share their mutual experiences and swap advice and concerns while celebrating their achievements with people who have been in the same situation.

"The event is also very important to staff," Catherine added. "It can seal the bond between us and the families. It is so wonderful to see the babies growing into health children."

The Unit will also be raising funds during the week and a raffle and cake sale will be held on the Mezzanine Floor at Blackpool Victoria Hospital on Friday, November 16 from 10am to 2pm. All money raised helps towards giving first class care to babies and families on the Neonatal Unit by providing such equipment as privacy screens, blackout blinds, admission bags and sibling packs as well as interactive iPads which can allow mums to see their new-born babies even if they cannot be with them.

Donations can also be made on the Unit's [Just Giving page](#).

# Trust service marks Remembrance Day

THE Trust has marked the centenary of the end of World War I with a special ceremony.

Hospital chaplain, Clive Lord, lead a moving service at Blackpool Victoria Hospital which included the Layton Primary School choir and bugler Ben Parkinson performing the Last Post.

Special guests included 95 year-old D-Day veteran, Leonard Curran and some of the knitters and crocheters who donated 28,000 poppies for the Remembrance displays.

The Royal British Legion provided standard bearers from the North West and formed part of the service as well as several Reservists who work for the Trust.

The service was held in front of the 15 foot, 1:5 scale model of the Menin Gate, the 'Cloak of Poppies', which features 20,000 of the handmade poppies and contains personal dedications to those killed or injured in armed conflict over the last 100 years plus original WW1 artefacts. Leading the Remembrance campaign is Associate Director of Facilities at the Trust, Nigel Fort.

He said: "We have been overwhelmed with the support that the community has given to this project. We are delighted that our unveiling event, held two weeks ago, and our Remembrance events have been so well attended.

"A very special thank you must go to all the sponsors that made the Cloak of Poppies possible, Eric and Colin, our local historians, Layton Primary School, our hard-working staff and of course our army of knitters.

"We would love to see this fabulous structure displayed again elsewhere, so we would love to hear from any museums or similar organisations



who would be interested."

The Last Post was played by bugler, Ben Parkinson, 14, from Woodplumpton in Preston. Ben, who attends Lancaster Royal Grammar School has been playing the bugle since he was seven.

Playing the Last Post is particularly poignant for Ben as he played at his former teacher's son's military funeral as he was sadly killed in service aged just 21. For this, Ben was given a special poppy badge with the Paratroopers crest featured in its centre.

He said: "I have been playing in my local church since I was nine years old. I feel privileged to be playing today – not many people would get this opportunity."

The choir from Layton Primary School sang and also signed the song, Fields of Gold. There were not many dry eyes in the house.

Trust Reservists, Major Rob Instrell, Lead Critical Care Outreach Practitioner; Major Jason Cupitt, Intensive Care Consultant and Norfrey Almera, Theatre Practitioner; attended the service.

Major Instrell said: "We have a combined service of around 20 years and we are very honoured and privileged to be part of this very moving service."





Leonard Curran at the hospital tribute

# A fantastic memorial

A 95-YEAR-old World War II veteran says a ground-breaking hospital memorial is a “fitting tribute” to those who lost their lives in the war.

Leonard Curran, originally from Carlisle, was emotional at the sight of the Cloak of Poppies at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, which contains 22,000 handmade poppies.

Leonard said: “It’s a fantastic memorial. It makes me feel proud to have served for my country.”

Born in 1923, Leonard volunteered for the navy in 1941 at just 18 years-old.

Following his basic training, he was on his first H.M.M.L boat (His Majesty’s Motor Launch) by Christmas as a Leading Hand in the engine room. Motor Launches were designed for harbour defence and submarine chasing or for armed high-speed air-sea rescue. In Leonard’s case, his vessel was hunting for U-Boats.

The boat operated from Scapa Flow, a body of water in the Orkney Islands. In 1944, the Launch was directed to Norfolk in readiness for the D-Day or Normandy landings. On the way, one of the boat’s engines had a fractured pipe and the skipper was going to turn back, but Leonard vowed to fix the pipe saying:

“We’re not going to miss this!”

The Launch patrolled the Channel until the word was given and the boat then acted as a decoy, deceiving the Germans into thinking that an attack was to happen at Calais instead of Normandy in Operation Bodyguard.

The Launch then turned to provide support to the main evacuations and moved along with troops as they advanced, guarding them from the sea.

After the war, Leonard returned to his apprenticeship as a mechanic and eventually moved to Blackpool, with his family, in 1969.

Leonard’s son, Ian, said: “I think dad’s time in the war, whilst a necessity, was something to be proud of.

“I remember I used to play with his medals as a boy. The hospital’s decision to build a monument to remember those who served during conflict, keeps the experiences alive for the veterans and allows younger people to understand and remember the sacrifices that were made.”

Leonard added: “The memorial is such a fitting tribute to those who gave their lives or were injured, fighting for their country. I am proud to have played my part.”

# Why hospital is the PLACE to be ...



Kitchen manager, Darren Cadwell

BLACKPOOL Victoria Hospital has beaten all national results for providing a good environment and enhanced non-clinical patient services.

The NHS carries out assessments of the quality of patient environments and non-clinical services to ensure every patient is cared for with compassion and dignity in a clean and safe environment. It also helps to ensure the hospital is a suitable place for all patients including those with dementia or disabilities.

The assessments are known as PLACE (Patient led Assessment Care of the Environment) and involve local people going into hospitals as part of a team of Patient Assessors to look at how the environment supports clinical care.

This year Blackpool Victoria has beaten the national and regional average for all Trusts in every area of the assessment. The results for Blackpool were:

- Cleanliness - 99.39% (national average 98.5%)
- Food – 93.52% (national average 90.2%)
- Privacy, dignity and wellbeing - 91.06% (national average 84.2%)
- Condition, appearance and maintenance – 98.76% (national average 94.3%)
- Dementia – 84.88% (national average 78.9%)

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- Disability – 92.16% (national average 84.2%)

Trust Senior Site Services Manager, Yvonne Widdows, said the PLACE team in Blackpool had worked extremely hard to ensure improvements to the patient environment.

“Patient experience and safety is our priority and we have made improvements to the hospital environment to try to make patient experience as pleasant as possible,” Yvonne said.

“A number of enhancements have been made from dementia clocks, contrasting toilet seats, grab rails and colour-coded bay doors on wards where appropriate, to improved lighting, corridor seating and better signage throughout the site.”

“We are delighted with the responses around our catering facilities. We pride ourselves on healthy catering and provide excellent nutrition and hydration with meals prepared fresh on site in top class kitchens,” Yvonne added.

Patient assessors were extremely impressed with advancements at Victoria Hospital and they were exceedingly complimentary about staff, who they described as providing great customer care in a professional, polite and caring way. The assessments are carried out at more than 1,190 hospitals and hospices nationally.

# Superhero campaign to keep babies safe

AS PART of Blackpool Better Start's 10 year programme to improve the life chances of children aged 0-4, a new 12-month campaign is being launched to raise awareness of the dangers of drinking during pregnancy and reduce the number of alcohol exposed pregnancies in the town.

The campaign – which launched on November 3, 2018 – features four local Blackpool residents depicted as superheroes, with the message 'Be Your Baby's Hero, Keep Alcohol to Zero'.

The strategy for the campaign followed extensive consultation with the community, and was created around Blackpool Better Start's ethos of social responsibility.

It is not just the responsibility of the pregnant women to reduce alcohol intake, it is also the responsibility of partners, grandparents, extended family and friends. This is shown in the campaign through the four characters, Supermum, Superdad, Supernan and Supermate.

The campaign will appear throughout the town on billboards, poster sites, phone kiosks and buses, as well as through social media, and will explain that no amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy.

Explaining the importance of the message, Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health at Blackpool Council said: "Blackpool Council has worked in partnership with Blackpool Better Start to produce a new public health campaign to warn families of the impact of drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

"The campaign will tackle the number of alcohol exposed pregnancies in the town, and will raise awareness of the impact of alcohol consumption in pregnancy. We know that in the past messages surrounding 'safe' alcohol limits during

pregnancy have been confusing, and this campaign has been created to clarify that there is no safe amount.

"We now know that drinking during pregnancy can lead to learning difficulties, heart problems and

permanent damage to a developing baby's brain. We must be explicit in explaining to families that the only way to guarantee your baby is not exposed to alcohol harm is to avoid alcohol completely."

Merle Davies, Director of Blackpool's Centre for Early Child Development said: "We are incredibly excited to launch this campaign and we hope that it has the intended impact of changing behaviour in the town.

"Using local people to champion the message of zero alcohol during pregnancy will resonate with the community and drive the message home more, as locals will be able to relate to the superheroes.

"We are measuring the impact of the campaign and will be rigorously evaluating its success over the 12 month period."





Hospital staff with some of the Youth Health Leaders. Below, Eric Lee from the Red Cross who took part in the event

# Pupils get insight into hospital careers

YOUNGSTERS from across the Fylde coast have been given a unique insight into life as an NHS professional.

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust held its latest Youth Health Leaders event at Blackpool Victoria Hospital with pupils from three local schools meeting a host of local healthcare experts.

Topics for discussion included smoking cessation, alcohol awareness and mental health alongside interactive presentations from a wide range of staff at the hospital and the Red Cross.

The event was organised by Practice Development Sister, Sharon Vickers, who oversees the Trust's successful Youth Health Leaders programme.

She said: "The feedback from the teachers was that the pupils had a wonderful day and returned to their schools with a head full of ideas of how to promote healthier lifestyles.

"I think this shows that engaging with youngsters is a valuable exercise in terms of health promotion and gives young people valuable skills. We would like to encourage more schools to get involved with the programme and work closer with their NHS.

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"The event was a success thanks to the hard work and preparation the LINK staff put into their display boards and their re-enacting of real patient scenarios.



"It takes a lot of hard work from people who work at the Trust to support this project and give the pupils the benefit of their experience and I am really grateful to them for their support.

Louise Brunskill, Health and Social Care Teacher at Hodgson Academy, said her pupils enjoyed the day.

She said: "This was a really useful day because the students have to do a lot of coursework and look at scenarios similar to what we have seen as part of this programme.

"Part of their course is also looking at setting up some sort of health and wellbeing awareness within school about issues that affect young people today so it fits in perfectly.

"It is also vital for the youngsters to know that the lifestyle choices they make at this age will have a big impact on their future."



**SUNDAY 25TH NOVEMBER**  
**WOODSIDE DRIVE BLACKPOOL**  
THE ROAD TO BLACKPOOL ZOO

**12.15PM REGISTRATION 1.00PM RACE**

PRE REGISTRATION REQUIRED  
CONTACT  
[BLUESKIES@BFWHOSPITALS.NHS.UK](mailto:BLUESKIES@BFWHOSPITALS.NHS.UK)

CHILDREN £5, ADULTS £10  
FAMILY OF 4 £25, GROUP OF 5 £40  
INCLUDES ELF HAT (SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY)



**RUN, JOG, STROLL**  
**OR JINGLE ALL THE WAY!**

APPROXIMATE DISTANCE 4.5KM  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE NATIONAL ELF SERVICE  
AND THE ELFIER WORKFORCE

Registered Charity Number 1051570

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hospitals fund  
The Charity for Blackpool Teaching Hospitals