

# Health Matters

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



## Safe & secure

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Issue 185, Monday, March 4, 2019

## Welcome from the Chief Executive

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



As an acute hospital we treat people who are medically in need, but when we discharge them back into the community we need to ensure they are safe and cared for.

Patients should be in a home environment if they are medically stable, and our new Home First pilot is helping us to meet this goal.

On discharge the patient is accompanied by the Red Cross and met at their home by an occupational therapist who will assess the person to ensure they are safe and organise any additional support they need.

Full details of the scheme can be found on Page 5.

We are also delighted to announce the opening of the 'Place of Calm' room designed to give a relaxed environment for children during counselling sessions.

The facility is part of a capital funding scheme to improve the provision, capacity and quality of health-based places of safety. Full details are on Page 4.

**Wendy Swift,  
Chief Executive**

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**Health Matters is also available online at [www.bfwh.nhs.uk](http://www.bfwh.nhs.uk)**

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# Janet can finally put her feet up



Janet Rigg puts her best foot forward!

These boots may be made for walking – but not when each step is excruciatingly painful.

And the problem is probably not with the boots – as thousands of foot patients will tell you.

Consultant Podiatric Surgeon, Lee Murphy, said the average person takes about 4,000 - 6,000 steps a day – and each step can be a nightmare for people suffering with painful bunions or foot deformities.

South Shore mum, Janet Riggs, says she is delighted to be able to walk easily again after years of terrible pain.

“Ten years ago I had bunion surgery on both feet which was very successful. Eight years later I got a condition called hammer toe and had corrective surgery to try to repair the deformed toe, but this did not go well,” former driving instructor Janet explained.

“The consultant said he needed to create a gap between my big toe and second toe to correct the problem. But after surgery my second toe was left sticking up. This meant it was very difficult and painful to wear shoes. I had bought a beautiful pair of really soft leather shoes and the first time I tried to wear them they were ruined as my toes bled profusely.”

Janet said her experience was horrific and totally affected the quality of her life.

“I could not even walk my dogs, every step was so painful,” Janet added.

Eighteen months later Janet was referred to Mr

Murphy’s podiatric foot surgery clinic at Whitegate Drive Health Centre.

Eight weeks she ago underwent corrective surgery to repair her foot.

“My care and treatment was excellent,” Janet said. “I am able to walk again without pain and I can enjoy my life. I am even going to buy another pair of those lovely soft leather shoes now the problems have been resolved.

“I cannot praise Mr Murphy and his team enough. They treat their patients as friends; they are incredibly professional and build up patient confidence.”

Mr Murphy said he was delighted to hear a patient thought his team had given great levels of care and compassion and improved their quality of life.

“We are very patient centred and constantly strive to ensure the very best care on every part of the foot surgery pathway,” Mr Murphy said.

The consultant explained: “Janet was struggling to fit into any shoes and was in considerable pain when walking. She was referred to our Department of Foot and Ankle Surgery and following her operation she is able to wear normal shoes again and walk comfortably.

Mr Murphy said: “The benefits from podiatric surgery can be massive. If someone is suffering from painful or progressive deformity we advise them to see their GP or podiatrist for a referral before a bunion becomes so big that more complex or extensive surgery is necessary.”

# Peaceful room helps children feel relaxed

A room at Blackpool Victoria Hospital has been designed to help children feel relaxed in a more comfortable environment during their counselling sessions.

The room will be used by the Child & Adolescent Support & Help Enhanced Response (CASHER) team who specialise in supporting people between the ages of 11 to 25, but prioritises those under 16.



The team and youngsters enjoy the new room

The 'Place of Calm' room, which will be used by mental health nurses, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) practitioners, safeguarding nurses, paediatric nurses, health visitors and school nurses, is a Government funded initiative to support children and young people in their counselling sessions with mental health experts.

Blackpool is one of the first hospitals to benefit from a share of the £15 million of capital funding to improve the provision, capacity and quality of health-based places of safety.

Elaine Walker, Integrated Emotional Health and Wellbeing Manager, said: "The room has been designed by local young people and is a quiet and more relaxing environment to enable young people to feel comfortable to talk about emotional and mental health matters.

"CASHER provide emotional health, mental health assessment and immediate support to young people who attend the hospital, often looking at how they can best access the ongoing support they need.

"We are also now able to offer appointments, for those who do not need medical intervention, as an alternative for young people going to A&E.

"It is wonderful to have the facility. It is very important that mental health support is receiving this attention. It will make a big difference and enhance the work we do."

CASHER team leader, John Stainton said: "Over the past three months there were 93 young people seen by the team. Seventy-four of these were discharged with a meaningful plan of care put in place to help them move forward.

"Previously to CASHER, the majority of young people would be admitted to the Adolescent or Children's Ward to be seen by CAMHS. This potentially could have meant a young person being admitted on a Friday evening and not being seen until Monday when CAMHS are working.

"This means the young people that we saw were able to return home, when safe to do so, on the understanding they could contact CASHER if they needed further support in the meantime."

The CASHER team also hold weekly groups for children aged between 10-16 who are seeking support on mental health and wellbeing issues.

Please contact [bfwh.casher.team@nhsnet](mailto:bfwh.casher.team@nhsnet) if you would like to find out more.

# Speeding up safe discharge

Patients are benefiting from a safer and faster discharge system being piloted by Blackpool Teaching Hospitals.

Home First is a fully supported discharge method which is getting people the care they need within the community while freeing up bed spaces and reducing readmissions.

Occupational therapist and physiotherapy manager, Charlotte Stubbs, explained: "Home First is a culture that we are trying to encompass within the hospital. It allows medically stable patients to go home for assessment and get social care support. Home is better for the patient because you are taking them out of the hospital environment where they may be more susceptible to hospital-borne infections and physical decline."

With Home First the Red Cross take the patient home and they are met at the door of their house by a therapist who is part of the Early Supported Discharge team. The patient is then taken round each room of their house to see how they cope with such activities as cooking, personal hygiene and going up or down stairs.

Charlotte, who is also the clinical lead for the Home First initiative, added: "The therapist will also look at access to and from the property and will advise on any emergency equipment that is needed to make the home safe. They will discuss with the patient what social or health care is needed and what support is required to get them back to their daily routine.

"The patient will then be referred to community services for ongoing support."

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**Patient John Killeen with members of the Home First team who made his discharge safe**

Prior to the Home First system the patient would have stayed in hospital awaiting the allocation of a care package and further assessment.

If a patient was taken home and the therapist believed they were not safe to cope, the hospital bed would be kept free for them for two hours so they could be returned to the ward.

Since the pilot started three months ago it has helped 65 patients return home early. Two had to be referred back to their hospital ward and two were transferred to Clifton Hospital for extra support. The Home First package remains in place until a social worker follows that patient up, usually after 3 to 5 days, and they will then take over the ongoing care.

To qualify for Home First, a patient must be medically stable and need ongoing support to regain an independent life. They do not necessarily have to be elderly, they could be an amputee, have MS, frailty or dementia.

Referrals are usually from ward staff, therapists, discharge facilitators or the Hospital Discharge Team. Home First is a test scheme designed to allow the hospital to learn from experience and develop the service as appropriate.

Charlotte added: "We are all very passionate that home is where patients should be if they are medically able. The challenge is to co-ordinate the discharge in a safe and effective way."

# Cancer mum gets her family holiday dream

Staff at Blackpool Victoria Hospital ensured a terminally ill patient enjoyed one last holiday.

Ann Thomson, 44, was given only four weeks to live following a short battle with cancer.

It was her dream to have one last holiday together with her family and Discharge Coordinators, Shelagh Rooney and Jo Barks and Communications Officer Alma Stewart, sprang into action to make sure the wish was granted.

Within hours, it was arranged that Ann and her family could spend a complimentary five days in the five star Brickhouse Cottages in Hambleton from February 11. Sadly, Ann passed away on Saturday, February 16, a day after returning home.

Ann's partner, Shane Jackson, 32, praised all those who helped organise the holiday, saying: "It was more than we could have asked for. It was unbelievable what they did for us.

"The space, the hot tub, the peaceful surroundings really helped us reconnect and spend time together at such a time and we made some lovely memories."

Shelagh said: "The family told me that they would love to be able to have one last break away to make some memories with their four children; Ryan, Stacey, Aleisha and Cameron; while they still could. I knew I had to help."

Alma, a former Pontin's Bluecoat, who works in the hospital's communications department, contacted her friends in the entertainment



Ann and her family in the holiday cottage with donors and NHS staff

industry. Within an hour Adam Spedding, a fellow entertainer, arranged accommodation with the family that owns Brickhouse Cottages, in Hambleton.

Shelagh and Jo donated food and toiletries and new swimwear for the week. Jackson's Florists delivered flowers, Lazy Days donated a family photo shoot, The Shovels pub gave a meal for five, Blackpool Zoo and the Sandcastle donated passes and Domino's pizza delivered a takeaway. Jeannie Crowhurst, secured an overnight stay at the Grand, Blackpool. Even a taxi ride to and from the resort was donated.

Vicki Murray from Brickhouse Cottages said: "It was nice to be able to offer a holiday in such sad circumstances. It was the right thing to do."

Shelagh added: "Our heartfelt thanks must go to everyone that helped pull this off. It's such a nice feeling to know that there are so many kind people to help realise a family's last wish."

# Can you help nurse on Zambia mission



Elaine Simper and one of the knitted unicorns

A Blackpool nurse is preparing for the trip of a lifetime.

Elaine Simper, who works in the Surgical Admissions Unit at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, is travelling to Zambia later this year to share her skills in a mission hospital in the country.

But as well as hoping to gain a unique insight into what life is like for a nurse in Africa, the mum of one is also raising money to buy a piece of important equipment that will help staff and patients.

Talking about her trip Elaine, 45, said: "I'll be part of a small team travelling to the Luampa Mission Hospital in Zambia.

"It serves a community of 49,000 people who live in the surrounding small villages where access to the hospital is predominantly by walking. The hospital officially has 58 beds and in the malaria season patients sleep on mattresses or on the floor.

"It lies 18km from the main road, down a sandy track. There is no running water to the hospital, the supply is from a pump in the grounds. Mains electricity was installed in late 2017, but is intermittent and unreliable providing many challenges for life-saving and ongoing patient care.

"I'll join staff and community teams to support their work in and around the hospital, sharing my skills and knowledge."

She added: "I have always wanted to do something like this and I am really looking forward to it. I always wanted to be able to share my skills as a nurse and I heard about this opportunity through my church and it just felt right.

"Healthcare in Africa is obviously very different and I have to be prepared for that, but if I can help anybody in any way while I am there that will be a great comfort to me."

Elaine, who has been a nurse since 2003, is looking to raise money for a piece of medical equipment called an oxygen concentrator which will be a valuable asset for the hospital.

To do that she has to raise £1,800 and is looking for help from friends, colleagues and the public. She said: "I know the hospital I am going to would really benefit from this piece of kit and I want to do my best to raise enough money to buy one.

"One of the things I am doing is knitting unicorns and selling them for £5. They are very popular at the moment."

If you can help Elaine in any way in her fundraising quest you can also sponsor her on her Just Giving page by clicking [here](#).



Patient Jim Hobday with Dr Alison Seed and specialist nurses, Lesley Howard and Gill Martin

# Technology boost for cardiac patient care

Cardiac patients have benefitted from an innovative partnership between Blackpool Teaching Hospitals and a commercial medical technology company.

The nine-month pilot scheme between the private and public sector has improved communication between NHS care providers and helped patients monitor and self-manage some aspects of their health conditions.

And the programme got massive thumbs-up from 82-year-old cardiac patient, Jim Hobday, who said the scheme had helped him with both his physical health and his psychological wellbeing.

Mr Hobday, a retired naval chief petty officer from Staining, received messages via his mobile phone which prompted him to think about taking care of himself.

“The calls were incredibly reassuring for me and made me realise I was not on my own but had support available when I needed it,” he said. “I

think this innovative use of new technology will benefit all patients and is certainly something the older generation can also interact with.”

Leading the project from Blackpool Teaching Hospitals, consultant cardiologist, Dr Alison Seed explained: “The NHS have put the focus on GPs, community health providers and hospitals working together to produce a more cohesive service. Boston Scientific, who manufacture cardiac pacemakers; in association with innovation company Accenture, were already looking at the way in which technology could help improve care co-ordination and they wanted the experience and expertise the Trust could offer.

Lead heart failure nurse specialist, Lesley Howard, said the programme had given them insights into new methods of communication.

“We are proud of the improvements we have made. We could see what was needed to coordinate the service and care we offer and this system helped us deliver it.”

# I was planning my funeral ...



A serving Major in the Duke of Lancaster Regiment, whose life was turned upside down by a cancer diagnosis, is now looking forward to the future thanks to the care provided at Blackpool Victoria Hospital.

Major George Henry Briscoe, MBE, pictured, was diagnosed with advanced stomach cancer in 2017 with health workers unsure if treatment would be successful.

The 54-year-old, who admitted that he was planning his own funeral, said: "In October 2017 I had stomach indigestion and was given antibiotics to clear up the infection but only a few months later my symptoms got worse.

"I was told at this point I had contracted *Helicobacter pylori* in the stomach, a bacterial infection caused through living in dirty and unhygienic conditions which is reflective of my time working in Afghanistan.

"After my biopsy results I received an urgent

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phone call from Dr Issacs from the Cancer team at Blackpool Victoria Hospital and I was told to come to hospital immediately.

"I knew something was wrong and to my horror it was explained that I had stomach cancer in the advanced stages and a large tumour which could reach other organs."

George added: "The likelihood of the chemotherapy working was 57 percent, so at this point I made a will and started planning my funeral as I believed I would die.

"I was convinced I wouldn't make it because of how weak I was, but I pulled through to being discharged. In January I got the good news that I had the all clear!

"I've come such a long way from how things looked at the start and this is all down to the NHS and the fantastic care at Blackpool Victoria Hospital. All the staff were so positive and did their very best to help me on my journey."

# REACH OUT

## CASHER Group

A new group for young  
people aged between  
10-16

Every Tuesday  
All sessions are  
6pm-8pm

Talbot and Brunswick  
Children's Centre,  
Gorton Street,  
Blackpool,  
FY13JW



Blackpool Teaching Hospitals   
NHS Foundation Trust

Blackpool Council  
TALBOT AND BRUNSWICK CHILDREN'S CENTRE

In partnership with  
Blackpool Boys & Girls Club

- Developing and learning new skills
- Making new friends/building confidence
- Having someone to talk to
- Understanding the qualities of positive friendships and relationships
- Playing sports
- Arts and crafts such as paints, clay, sand, pencils, and creating journals
- And many more...

If you would like to attend this group or know someone that would,  
please email

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