

Health Matters

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



All smiles for granddad

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Life savers

Grateful patient praises cardiac consultants

— Page 5

Healthy award

Trust team picks up top award

— Page 6

Issue 200, Monday, September 30, 2019

Contents

News

Virtual reality boost training

Virtual reality is about to revolutionise the way a Blackpool hospital trains the clinical staff of tomorrow.

Page 3



White way to mental health support

A free mental health resource for people living with depression and other conditions is now available across the whole of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre.

Page 4

Surgeons praised

Three Blackpool heart surgeons have been praised for their bravery after performing a complex and challenging procedure to give a 67-year-old grandad his life back.

Page 5



▲ Virtual Reality training

Top award for team

The Trust's Occupational Health & Wellbeing department has been recognised for the high standard of service it provides to staff with a nationally recognised re-accreditation.

Page 6

► Trust team honoured for top quality staff care

▼ Blackpool Transport staff hit the road to boost Blue Skies charity funds



Novel idea for children

Children at Blackpool Victoria Hospital will have new pages to turn after the Children's Ward was gifted over £250 worth of books.

Page 7

Best foot forward for charity

A dozen Blackpool Transport staff have raised over £750 for their local NHS Charity by walking the 11 mile Number One bus route.

Page 8



Governor election results

The Trust has announced the results of its latest round of Governor elections.

Page 9

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Virtual reality training looks to the future

VIRTUAL reality is about to revolutionise the way a Blackpool hospital trains the clinical staff of tomorrow.

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals has received four virtual reality (VR) systems allowing state-of-the-art teaching within its Simulation and Skills learning suite.

VR tests a student's ability to analyse a situation and respond appropriately to the information available while keeping open communication channels with both the patient and other members of staff.

Mark Hatch, Clinical Skills Facilitator, at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, said: "Using VR headsets the student gets complete immersion and can repeat scenarios they have done in simulation, it's about learning from repetition."

There are 18 to 20 different scenarios dealing with such things as chest pain, sepsis, lung



collapse or a generally unwell patient. The student must treat the virtual patient as in real life and perform investigations, start treatments and interact with team members and the patient.

"The system really encourages team working with the virtual people who are in the room with the student," Mark explained.

"VR reacts to the student's decision making. The scenario will change according to what blood tests, x-rays, ECGs, medication and phone calls he or she makes. It works on communication, decision making, team working and skills. It is about both medical and non-technical skills."

The four VR systems cost £48,000 and have been funded by Health Education England.

"It has been in place for a few months and is still being trialled at the moment so we can ensure we get the best possible use out of it. Everyone who has tried it has been very impressed," Mark added.

Free online mental health support

A FREE mental health resource for people living with depression and other conditions is now available across the whole of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre.

Big White Wall, which is available at www.bigwhitewall.com, provides a clinically safe and anonymous online community providing peer to peer support, personal assessments and self-help courses for those who need it.

And thanks to NHS Blackpool and NHS Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), the service is now available to all people with a Fylde Coast postcode.

Dr Neil Hartley-Smith, a Blackpool GP and clinical adviser to the CCGs, said: "We are committed to supporting people living with mental health on the Fylde Coast by providing varied and high quality services for them to access.

"Big White Wall is a fantastic tool for people who are suffering as they can log in anonymously and express how they are feeling to a community of people who feel the same way.

"And for those who struggle to put how they feel into words, they can 'draw a brick' to express the difficulties they are facing, which many people find quite therapeutic and relieving."

Big White Wall chief executive Henry Jones said: "Everyone has mental health and we believe everyone should be able to access support as and when they need it.

24/7 ONLINE & ANONYMOUS SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Free in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre

Big White Wall®

Knowing Big White Wall is there 24/7 gives me peace of mind

16+

Get Support Take Control Feel Better

"We are delighted to form part of a joint strategy from NHS Fylde and Wyre and NHS Blackpool CCGs of delivering highly effective and easily accessible support for all Fylde Coast residents. We are looking forward to welcoming everyone to our community."

The Big White Wall is constantly monitored by 'wall guides' who are on hand 24/7 and will intervene if members seem particularly low and at risk and provide personal support on a one-to-one basis.

Big White Wall also offers members the opportunity to take online tests to measure their anxiety or depression levels to set goals and track their progress.

Online courses with health professionals covering things like sleep problems, stopping smoking and anger management are also available.

For more information or to sign up to Big White Wall quickly, anonymously and free of charge, visit www.bigwhitewall.com

Surgeons are praised after cardiac op



THREE Blackpool heart surgeons have been praised for their bravery after performing a complex and challenging procedure to give a 67-year-old grandad his life back.

Former sales manager, Nigel English, was just 44 when he had to undergo a heart bypass graft. He had a serious artery blockage and two leg vein grafts were performed at that time. Remarkably these grafts lasted 22 years, but in July 2018 Nigel, of Inskip, started to suffer chest pains.

"I knew that pain immediately; it was the same pain as I had in 1996," Nigel explained. "I knew I was in trouble.

"On 21st October 2018 at 4am, I collapsed on my bathroom floor. My wife called 999 and I was brought into Blackpool Victoria Hospital A&E where I later had a heart attack and then, worse, a cardiac arrest.

"I was briefly out of this world until they got me going again and sent me on a fast trolley to the Cardiology PCI (percutaneous coronary intervention) unit. I felt that my life was over. "

To save his life, interventional cardiologist, Dr Grahame Goode, put a stent into the former leg vein graft and Nigel started to recover but, because old leg vein grafts do not respond well to stents, this could only be a short term fix.

It was necessary to open up the original artery which had been blocked for more than 20 years because most of his heart muscle was dependent on a single vein graft which had a stent which had re-narrowed. If this was to block off then he would

be at risk of a massive heart attack.

"This is a highly complex and challenging procedure and only a small number of UK doctors have performed this operation," Nigel added.

The procedure is PCI of chronic total occlusion of coronary artery, which treats an artery which is totally blocked.

"It is very new technology and needs massive skill from someone experienced in doing it," Nigel said. "So how do you get experience in a new technique? Only brave doctors would try."

Nigel, who had been a heavy smoker and had worked in a stressful environment, said the conditions of his Left Coronary Artery made his case even more difficult. "It needed doctors to be willing to take on a complex case," he said.

A first attempt was made in May 2019 which was unsuccessful, but the determined medics, Dr Billal Patel, Dr Grahame Goode and Dr Jonas Eichhoefer, tried again in August, and this time the operation was a success.

Nigel explained: "The feeling I had is very hard to describe. I was over the moon. I just got my life back! The level of skill and bravery these three surgeons displayed was something very special,"

Nigel added. "I am very lucky that such skill is available on our own doorstep at Blackpool Victoria Hospital. I can only say thank you to these men who totally changed my life. Now it's done, the pain has gone, the fear has gone and I can look forward. Getting to 70 might actually happen now."

Occupational health team gets top rating



Sue Wild, Head of Occupational Health, with team members

BLACKPOOL Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's Occupational Health & Wellbeing department has been recognised for the high standard of service it provides to staff with a nationally recognised re-accreditation.

The team has achieved and was awarded with the Safe Effective Quality Occupational Health Service (SEQOHS) Accreditation following a formal, independent assessment.

SEQOHS is a scheme run by the Royal College of Physicians in association with the Faculty of Occupational Medicine.

The accreditation criteria is measured against a set of comprehensive standards designed to help raise the level and quality of care provided by Occupational Health & Wellbeing providers.

Launched in December 2010, the standards cover areas such as staff competency, safety and accessibility of facilities and equipment, and meeting specific NHS standards.

Sue Wild, Head of Occupational Health at the Trust, said: "Looking after staff, making sure they are healthy and well, is a priority for the organisation and essential to making sure the Trust is able to deliver safe and compassionate care to patients, every time.

"This accreditation proves our commitment to providing a high quality service, as we believe that a well looked after workforce is one that provides better care and support to patients.

"It also provides independent validation of our focus to continuously deliver quality occupational health and wellbeing service."

Book pledge proves a novel idea



Gaye McDonald, Play Specialist, and Leanne Garrett

CHILDREN at Blackpool Victoria Hospital will have new pages to turn after the Children's Ward was gifted over £250 worth of books.

Owner of Mrs G and the Reading Tepee Bookshop, Leanne Garrett, 32, sparked the idea for a community book pledge when her little girl Ophelia spent some time at the hospital's A&E Department.

The time spent with her daughter in The Vic made her realise that the hospital could do with a wider, more current, selection of books.

She said: "I'm passionate about getting children to read, and being able to experience books might help them discover a love for them.

"You can be sat around for a long time when you're in hospital with a poorly child. So, our go-to is books."

As well as owning her own business, the mum of two is a part-time teacher at a local primary school and an organiser for the book publisher Usborne.

Determined to raise the profile of reading for enjoyment and not just for homework, her community book pledge is a small part of her efforts.

Sponsored reads, pop-up book shops and book clubs are just a few of the ways Leanne encourages children and their parents to pick up a book.

"It's like my secret mission to get everyone into reading and ditch the iPads. A lot of people will say that their children don't like reading but I say, no, they've just not found the right book yet!"

Local businesses were keen to get on board with the initiative, including: Hungry Monkey, Toddler Sense, Bee Bop Sensory, Slimming World, Kidslingo French Fylde Coast and BilinguaSing Fylde Coast. Usborne themselves gave 20% of the total pledge back in even more books.

Leanne praises the range of books that Usborne offer and explains that as well as supporting a positive attitude towards discussing mental health, their books also prompt conversations about body image and gender identity.

Blackpool Transport staff support charity

A DOZEN Blackpool Transport staff have raised over £750 for their local NHS Charity by walking the 11 mile Number One bus route.

Led by Matt Consadine, 44, a Tram Conductor for Blackpool Transporter, the walkers set off on their challenge in aid of Blue Skies Hospitals Fund, the charity for Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

He said: "The route is a decent distance, but for a couple of us who are just out of heart surgery, it's a long, long walk."

Matt came up with the idea to "Walk the One" as a way to give back to the Cardiac Centre at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, whilst fundraising with his Blackpool Transport colleagues.

Having suffered from a life-threatening aortic dissection two years ago and undergoing 14 hours of surgery, he's keen to thank the Vic for the treatment he received.

"I'm still alive; I've still got a job, so I can't complain about anything. Things could've been a lot worse."

He explains that there's one quote he's particularly warmed to since the surgery.

"It doesn't matter what the weather is like, what's on the TV, or if there's anything wrong- check your pulse. If you've got one, today is a good day."



Neil Towler, Sue Moon and Matt Consadine presenting the cheque to Mr Andrew Duncan on Aortic Awareness Day.

The operation was performed by Mr Andrew Duncan, a Cardiothoracic Surgeon, who admits that Matt was lucky to survive.

"In simple terms, aortic dissection is when the aorta splits and either squashes the heart or ruptures the aorta. The survival rate is very low as it's often not recognised earlier, but we see around 12 people a year with this condition."

Coincidentally, the walkers presented the cheque to Mr Duncan on Aortic Awareness Day on 19th September – an international campaign to raise awareness of acute aortic dissection in the minds of health care workers treating people with acute chest pain symptoms, as it's a diagnosis that is frequently missed with fatal consequences.

Kila Redfeam, Head of Fundraising, said: "Hearing Matt's story makes you realise how much this donation means to him, and we're very happy that the money can go towards enhancing patient care in the department that saved his life."

New Governors for the Trust

BLACKPOOL Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has announced the results of its latest round of Governor elections.

This election was to fill seats due to vacancies or terms of office ending in the following public constituencies: Blackpool, Fylde, Wyre and North West Counties, and in the following staff constituencies: Nursing & Midwifery and Clinical Support.

The following candidates were elected:-

Blackpool Constituency

Lisa Robins (newly elected)
Zacky Hameed (re-elected)
Graham Curry (newly elected)
Jeanette Beckett (newly elected)

Fylde Constituency

Steven Gratrix (newly elected)

Wyre Constituency

Patricia Greenhough (newly elected)
Sue Crouch (re-elected)
Ian Owen (re-elected)

North West Counties Constituency

Stephen Cross (elected unopposed)

Nursing and Midwifery Constituency

Sharon Vickers (re-elected)

Clinical Support Constituency

Jenny Gavin (elected unopposed)

The following Governors either did not stand for re-election or were not re-elected:-



Pearse Butler

Blackpool Constituency

Robert Hudson
Beverley Clark
Heather O'Hara

Fylde Constituency

Tony Winter

Trust Chair, Pearse Butler, said: "I am delighted to welcome our new Governors to the Trust. Governors do a great job and I look forward to working with them to help us achieve our objectives.

"I would also like to thank those Governors who chose not to stand for re-election or were not re-elected for their support over the past few years."

The Council of Governors is responsible for representing the interests of Trust members and partner organisations in the local health economy.

For further information about this Press Release, please contact Julie Harrison, Temporary Membership and Governors Officer, on telephone number 01253 956673 or email julie.harrison47@nhs.net.