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Summer/Autumn 2020

NHS

Maidstone and
Tunbridge Wells
NHS Trust



P10

**"I knew I was in
safe hands."**

Marc Seager reveals how the Kent Oncology
Centre helped him beat cancer

MTW

Welcome to Patient First!

As you start turning the pages of this magazine you might notice it looks a little different to last time, and you'd be right. It's undergone a makeover!

We're still carrying the same great stories about our exceptional staff and outstanding care but it's bolder, brighter and has a fresh and modern feel to it - we hope you like it as much as we do!

And that's not all that has changed since the pandemic begun.

Like most NHS Trusts across the country, we've had to change the way we work in order to keep our staff and patients safe. On page 3 we reveal our new normal and on pages 6 and 7 you can read about how the use of technology has helped our patients stay in touch with their loved ones whilst visiting restrictions were put in place across our hospital sites.

The level of support from the community has been overwhelming over the last few months, from clapping on a Thursday night to donations and pictures and letters of support, the efforts people have gone to has not gone unnoticed. To show our appreciation we have devoted page 15 to thanking everyone for all that they have done to help lift our staff members' spirits. Words (and pictures) really aren't enough though.

You can also read Marc Seager's story about being given a second chance at life after beating cancer thanks to the support and care he received from our staff (page 10).

Happy reading!

The Patient First team

PS due to the pandemic this magazine is only available online. Visit www.mtw.nhs.uk/patientfirst

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The new normal

Just like other NHS Trusts across the country, the coronavirus pandemic saw MTW having to change the way it worked.

Visiting restrictions and social distancing measures were put in place at our hospital sites, only urgent and essential hospital services continued to run, outpatient appointments were carried out virtually, and the wearing of face coverings was introduced. Our staff also had to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), in line with government guidance, to reduce the risk of spreading the virus and protect both themselves and patients from it.

But following a dramatic drop in the number of coronavirus patients needing treatment, all of our clinical services are now fully open. Planned operations which had to be suspended have restarted and we've relaxed some of our visiting restrictions. Hospital life, however, is certainly going to continue to be very different to before the pandemic.

The safety of our patients and those who look after them is our top priority. As a result, we've introduced social distancing measures across our hospitals and we'll continue to hold appointments virtually. We'll also maintain separate areas to care and treat patients who may have, or are suspected of having the virus. Our hospital cafes will remain closed to the public for the foreseeable future, although refreshments are still available to buy from other hospital retailers. Patients and visitors will have their temperature checked at all



main entrances before entering and those undergoing surgery will be asked to have a Covid-19 swab at our testing centres, 48 hours before their procedure is due. In addition, patients and visitors will also need to wear a face covering at all times in our hospitals.

All of these measures are needed to ensure we keep everyone safe so please follow the rules when you visit our sites. We thank everyone for their patience and understanding during these unprecedented times.

To see our latest visitor policy visit www.mtw.nhs.uk

Choir releases coronavirus themed cover version of hit song 'Beat it'

A coronavirus themed version of Michael Jackson's hit song 'Beat it' has been produced by the Trust's staff choir.

The 12 members, switched the words of the famous song to remind the public that they need to do all that they can to help save lives and beat the virus.

To make sure they were practising what they were preaching, they rehearsed the song together using the video messaging service Zoom. They then used handheld devices and computers to record themselves singing individually so the footage could be edited together for the final video performance.

SingingNation, who partner with MTW to run weekly staff choirs at both Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells hospitals, supported the project.



To watch the video visit the Trust's YouTube channel and search for 'Beat It' by the MTW Staff Choir.



Assessment area doubles in size

An assessment area for patients brought by ambulance to Maidstone Hospital's Emergency Department (ED), has more than doubled in size to help ensure patients receive rapid access to the right care and treatment by the right people in the right place.

As part of the Trust's ongoing plans to improve patient care, the number of bays in the Rapid Assessment Point (RAP) has increased from three to seven after the service was moved to the front entrance.

In order to create the clinical area, several offices were relocated to the new Acute Assessment Unit (AAU) which opened at the beginning of March next to ED.

John Clulow, Consultant/Lead Advanced Clinical Practitioner, Medicine and Emergency Care, said: "RAP is a national best practice tool designed to support best patient care.

"Patients who arrive by ambulance are taken to RAP where they are assessed by a senior clinical decision maker, such as an emergency medicine registrar or



consultant. That person can then either refer the patient to a speciality such as the medical or surgical teams or order tests or images to help diagnose a patient so those investigations are ready when they are assessed by the next emergency clinician, speeding up their visit to the department.

"Increasing RAP's capacity at Maidstone Hospital allows rapid handover of the patient's care from SECamb to our staff. As a result the SECamb crew is then able to get back on the road and respond to the next emergency call in the community."

Mum raises more than £19k for ICU

A fundraising appeal started by a mum during the pandemic as a way of thanking our medical staff who helped save her son's life twice, has raised more than £19,500 for the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

Caroline May took the emergency number 999 and flipped it on its head to create the Reverse 999 Appeal which urges people to donate £9.99 to the hospital's ICU via the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust Charitable Fund.

Within five days of the fundraiser launching, £15,000 of the £30,000 target had been raised thanks to friends and family not only donating but also sharing the appeal via their social media accounts so that it soon became a community campaign with over 500 local people making donations!

The married mum of three, who lives in Langton Green, near Tunbridge Wells, said: "My two year old son Arthur has a heart condition called myocarditis and a suspected immunodeficiency condition.

"Tunbridge Wells Hospital saved his life in May 2018 when he was struck by a viral infection of the heart and again in December 2019 when he had sepsis.

"We take it for granted that we can call 999 when we want urgent medical help, so I started the Reverse 999 Appeal so people can type those numbers in a different way and help support our local hospital. As well as it being a chance for me to give back and say 'thank you' to Tunbridge Wells Hospital for saving Arthur's life, I also wanted to do something to help others during the pandemic."

So far the funds have helped pay for six Aerogens - a device which delivers drugs straight into a patient's lungs via a ventilator; a high spec rehabilitation chair, plus six dementia clocks which can be used by patients suffering from delirium.

Caroline added: "I'm extremely grateful to everyone who has donated to the appeal so far, now I'm asking local schools and business as well as individuals to help me reach the £30,000 target.

Jane Sansom, Matron for ICU at Tunbridge Wells Hospital, said:

"The money Caroline has raised is already making a real difference to the care we provide patients with.

"The new rehabilitation chair means we now have three of them on ICU allowing us to get more patients out of their beds and in to an upright position. The dementia clocks are really helpful for patients, who may be disorientated due to their condition, to understand what time of day it is, and the Aerogens allow staff to get drugs directly into a patient's lungs to help them breathe so the impact these items are having on our patients is huge."

To make a donation, please visit the following JustGiving page www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tunbridgewellsicu



**£19,500 of
£30,000
target reached
so far**



Garden makeover completed thanks to partner agencies and volunteers

A makeover of the courtyard garden at the heart of the Kent Oncology Centre has been completed thanks to volunteers, Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) and South East Water.

Debbie Stansfield, who works as an Assistant Manager for Macmillan Cancer Support Centre at Maidstone Hospital, came up with the idea at the start of the pandemic after she noticed it was looking tired and in need of some TLC.

Following an appeal on Facebook, the local community donated plants, paint, gardening tools and flowers. A former Kent Oncology Centre patient made glass artwork to place among the flowers and the family of a cancer patient, who sadly passed away, funded several sun parasols and some of the plants. Steve Shearman, from East Farleigh, also provided a holding pond for the fish to be held in whilst the pond was cleaned.

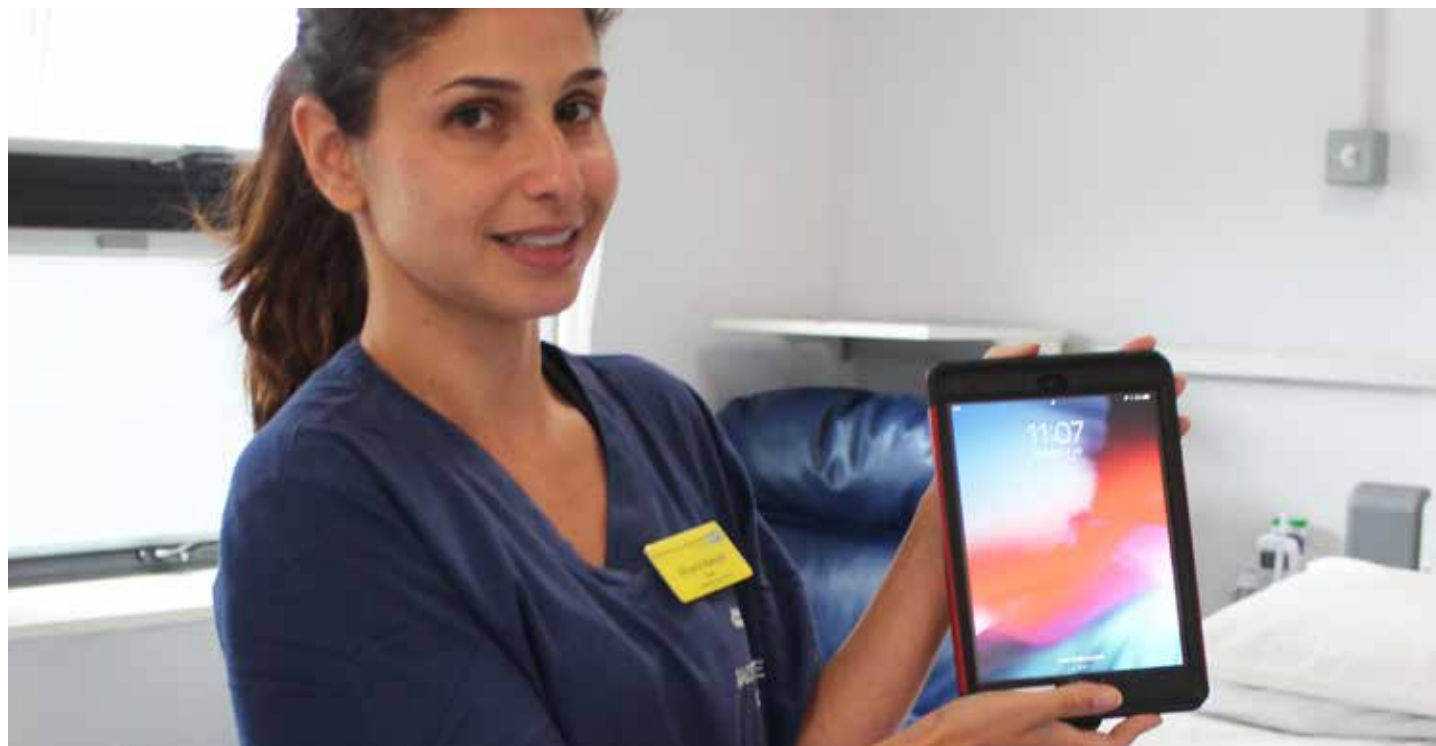
The work to re-paint the existing garden furniture, clear the flower beds, drain and clean the pond and replant new flowers was carried out, in their own time, by Debbie and her husband Nick, alongside their two children Harry and Lizzie and their partners. The Trust's Voluntary Services Manager Anne-Marie Stevens-Swain, her husband Paul, and Charlotte Head, Voluntary Services Assistant, also pitched in.

Thanks to South East Water donating the water and Kent Fire and Rescue Service transporting it to Maidstone Hospital and pumping it in using a hose reel, the pond was refilled – marking the final touch.

A Hearts of Hope display has also been installed. It features laminated hearts attached to a wooden trellis which contain messages from patients and staff who work in the Kent Oncology Centre about what they're looking forward to after lockdown.



How technology is benefiting patients and their



Now more than ever patients who have been admitted to our hospitals need to be able to stay in contact with their family and friends. As a Trust we also need to minimise the number of face-to-face appointments to help reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

Here we take a look at how the use of technology is helping bring people together when social distancing has kept them apart.

iPads used to help patients stay in touch

Over the last few months we've rolled out iPads across our wards and Intensive Care Units (ICU) at both of our hospital sites so inpatients can still see and speak to their nearest and dearest via video messaging services, such as FaceTime or Skype.

ICU cares for some of our sickest patients, including those on ventilators due to Covid-19. Having iPads on ICU means our staff can also help relatives say their final goodbyes to their loved one before they sadly pass away.

Morfydd Williams, the Trust's Director of IT Transformation, said: "We know the iPads are making a real difference to our patients.

"Heart-warming stories shared by staff about how patients have used the iPads include a patient on ICU being able to wish their son a happy birthday from their hospital bed and another patient being able to see his wife, children and dog for the first time in five weeks. Hearing those stories makes what we have achieved in a short space of time so rewarding."

Video messaging service helps parents see their baby when they can't be there

Parents of premature and sick babies being cared for on the Neonatal Unit at Tunbridge Wells Hospital can also see their baby via video when they're unable to be with their child.

The secure video messaging application vCreate, which was rolled out on the Neonatal Unit permanently following a successful three month trial before the pandemic, allows clinical teams to send video updates to parents when they're not able to be at the hospital.

vCreate aims to minimise separation anxiety and bring comfort to worried parents who haven't been able to take their baby home with them as planned. Parents can login to the vCreate App at any time to see how their child is progressing and can leave notes and feedback for the nursing team. Once their baby has been discharged from hospital, parents are able to download the videos and keep them forever.

Morrisons Foundation, which is part of the national supermarket chain, donated £9,600 to Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust Charitable Fund, to fund the service for two years.

John Allen and partner Allison Woods (pictured) used the app when they couldn't physically be with their son Rafferty whilst he was being cared for on the unit.

Rafferty, who was born at 26 weeks weighing just 900 grams, spent a total of 102 days in three different hospitals - 65 of which were spent on the Neonatal Unit at Tunbridge Wells Hospital - following his birth on

families during the pandemic

19 December 2019. He was eventually discharged from the unit on 30 March 2020 – six days after his original due date.



Dad of two John, from Kings Hill, said: "The video messaging service gave us a boost especially after all we had been through with Rafferty. After leaving the hospital at night, sometimes very late, we would receive our photos and videos early in the morning which was great. To see that Rafferty was alright before we returned to hospital was very comforting.

Outpatient appointments held via video conferencing

In addition, more than 500 patient appointments have been held virtually by the Trust during the pandemic after a programme to introduce video consultation appointments (VCA) was accelerated in response to coronavirus (Covid-19).

Our Sexual Health Service started trialing the service back in November 2019, but within four weeks of the pandemic hitting the UK, we had swiftly extended the service to eight other departments - Neurology, Oncology, Head and Neck, Women's Health, Respiratory, Orthopaedic, Paediatric and Cardiology. It is now set to be rolled out to Chronic Pain, Physiotherapy and Speech Therapy too.

In total there are 114 users across the specialties using the service. The benefits of the virtual service include reduced travel times and associated expenses for patients as they can attend their appointment from the comfort of their own home or any other appropriate location. In addition, it is also helping teams across the Trust to improve patient care.

Dr Peter Maskell, the Trust's Medical Director, said: "In addition we are also trialing the technology as a tool in our Emergency Departments (ED) to show Ophthalmologists eye injuries. The camera is attached

to a slit lamp so the clinician in ED can shine the light into the patient's eye and send the video images directly to the Ophthalmologist. It means if the Ophthalmologist is not close to ED they can view the images from where they are and diagnose the patient far more quickly, meaning the patient is treated quicker and they don't have to wait around." Jane Saunders, the Trust's Programme Director for EPR and Digital Transformation, said: "Covid-19 has highlighted how invaluable technology is and how we can utilise it properly within the Trust to benefit patients and clinicians alike.

"Our forthcoming digital transformation strategy aims for outpatient care to continue to utilise technology by default and the use of video conferencing technology is a great step in achieving this goal.

"As we return to normal levels of activity, we anticipate up to 60% of future outpatient appointments will be carried out via phone or video conferencing. This will enable us to comply with social distancing recommendations, to maintain safety for patients, and help us ensure we have sufficient staff for those patients who need to come into hospital for a face to face consultation."



iPads



vCreate



Video Consultation

Fundraising



A huge thank you to everyone who has fundraised for our dedicated charity during the coronavirus pandemic.

The support we have received from the local community has been outstanding. From marching dinosaurs to cake bakes, 24-hour static cycle rides to head shaves, handmade rainbows and virtual runs – your fundraising efforts have been truly phenomenal.

Every single penny of your money helps us to do more for staff, patients and carers.

For more information about how you can support the charity please follow @mtwcharity on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Laura Kennedy
Fundraising Manager

MTW
Exceptional people,
outstanding care



Good sports

Individuals and clubs have embraced sporting activities over the last few months such as football, cycling, walking and running as well as exercises including burpees, to help raise money for our dedicated charity. Here's a taster of some of the fundraisers:

- Franco Minieri, from Snodland, raised £2,250 after he cycled 577 miles in a month.
- Tonbridge Juddians Under 14s rugby team collectively completed more than 25,000 burpees to raise over £1,500 shared between MTW and Wooden Spoon, the children's charity of rugby.
- Under 13s West Kent Football Squad raised £1,451 after players, coaches and parents were set a challenge to run a 70 mile virtual route which started in Tunbridge Wells and ended at the Olympic Park in London.



Rainbows lead to cash

Many of our fundraisers have been using their creative talents, such as glass making and crocheting.

Jess Lewis raised £400 through the sale of brightly coloured crochet rainbows and Clare Summons generously donated over £1,400 by selling beautiful glass rainbows.



Dame Kelly Holmes backs 'Go The Distance'

Our first ever virtual active fundraiser, which was launched this summer, was backed by double Olympic gold medalist and Kent resident, Dame Kelly Holmes.

The event challenged people to walk, run or cycle either 5km, 10km, a half marathon or full marathon in 30 days in return for sponsorship to support the charity's dedicated Covid-19 response fund for staff health and wellbeing.

Even our very own CEO Miles Scott got in on the action by running a marathon! The route took him from Crowborough Birthing Centre to Tunbridge Wells Hospital then on to our site at Paddock Wood before finishing at Maidstone Hospital where he used the rainbow crossing as the finishing line!

You can still donate. Simply visit justgiving.com and search for MTW 'Go The Distance' 2020.



Bakers bring in the dough

Novice and experienced bakers helped to bring in some dough to the tune of £3,000 for the charity after they rose to a new baking challenge.

The challenge involved participants baking a sweet treat, sharing their photos on social media, nominating five people to do the same and donating £5.

To join the challenge, or donate, visit justgiving.com and search for MTW Baking Bonanza.



Fruit and veg grow funds

The village of Fordcombe raised nearly £200 by buying plants such as courgettes, strawberries and peppers via a sale organised by local couple Helen and John Morrison.



Cash boost for Kent Oncology Centre

A generous donation of more than £11,600 by the Cornwallis East Kent Freemasons and the Province of West Kent Freemasons has benefited the Kent Oncology Centre's prostate brachytherapy service by funding vital equipment.

Brachytherapy is an established procedure for treating prostate cancer.

Tributes for Thomas fund Neonatal Unit equipment

A family's amazing fundraising achievement has funded vital new equipment for our Neonatal Unit at Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

William O'Shea and partner Vicky were determined to fundraise in support of the unit following the tragic loss of their son, Thomas.

Joined by sister Eleanor O'Shea, family and friends hosted a charity rugby match which included a successful raffle.

William also put himself through his paces and ran a half marathon.

Thanks to their tenacity the unit has bought a cot canopy cover, six breast pumps and 10 stethoscopes, benefiting many families.



A second chance at life after beating cancer

Being an ex-semi-professional footballer and keen sportsman, Marc Seager had always considered himself to be fit and healthy.

So when he was diagnosed with throat cancer it knocked him, and his family, for six.

He spoke to Patient First about the outstanding care and support he received from our staff whilst undergoing treatment at the Kent Oncology Centre at Maidstone Hospital.

When Marc Seager discovered a lump in his throat it was his wife Paula who encouraged him to book an appointment with his GP to get it checked out.

Four weeks after consulting his GP Marc was given the devastating news that he had throat cancer.

"Hearing the words 'You have cancer' is a life changer," said the 48-year-old from Rainham, Kent.

"I just felt numb with fear. My mind was racing in every direction - thoughts of how this will affect my wife and three children, what about my job, how will we pay the mortgage and why has this happened to me.

"For the first time in my life I was scared, scared of the unknown and the journey ahead."

The first part of Marc's treatment involved having his tonsils removed at Medway Maritime Hospital. This was followed by an operation at East Grinstead Hospital during which the surgeon not only removed the tumour from his throat but also re-routed the main nerve of his shoulder due to the tumour wrapping itself around it.

He then attended the Kent Oncology Centre at Maidstone Hospital where he underwent 30 sessions of radiotherapy and three, nine hour sessions of chemotherapy over the course of six weeks.

Talking about the care he received at the centre Marc said: "Having cancer turns your whole world upside down but from the moment I was diagnosed and started receiving treatment at the Kent Oncology Centre I knew I was in safe hands and the support, care and understanding I received throughout was fantastic.

"All the staff in Radiotherapy were so supportive and understanding. The centre also has Macmillan Cancer Support staff there to help you understand your diagnosis and talk to you about any concerns or worries you may have such as finances or how you're coping mentally.



"When I was having radiotherapy and chemotherapy, that's when the journey became really tough for me. Had it not been for all the support I received from everyone involved with my care I'm not sure I would have made it through."

Marc was given the all clear in August 2019 and now visits the Kent Oncology Centre every six weeks for check-ups – something he will continue to do until August 2021.

He added: "I have no idea what the future holds but I plan on enjoying every minute of it with my family. I feel like I have been given a second chance in life.

"I knew I was in safe hands."

"Golf has always been a very big part of my life and I was actually told not to expect to play again after my operation but I worked hard with the Physiotherapist and did everything to make my shoulder strong again and now I'm back playing and loving every minute of it. I'm not quite back to the level I was before my illness but I'm cancer free so I'm not complaining. I'm just grateful I can play again."

Reflecting on the impact cancer has had on his life Marc added: "It's a horrible illness but I truly believe it's helped me to become a better person – I certainly don't take life or my health for granted.

"One thing cancer has taught me is never to be afraid of talking about how you feel. I used to think I was being weak but I soon realised you are never alone because all of us cancer patients are one, we are a family - a very special family."

Handbag designer produces holdsters for staff

Fashion accessories designer Anya Hindmarch donated 125 specially designed holdsters to staff in our Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and theatres so they could safely carry and access their belongings whilst working during the coronavirus outbreak.

MTW was the only Trust in Kent chosen to trial the holdsters which have been created by the English designer so staff can wear it whilst wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which prevents them from accessing their uniform pockets.

Designed with comfort and safety in mind, the holdster is made from durable and wipeable fabric, has adjustable, harness-like straps for comfort, a host of pockets for belongings and is finished with an 'NHS heroes' embroidery.

Trudie Phillips, Anaesthetic and Intensive Care Consultant, said: "Having a holdster to keep all personal and work-based equipment in has proved integral to helping make our professional lives easier, whilst ensuring we adhere to infection control guidelines. We are so very grateful for this kind donation from Anya and her team."



In total 400 holdsters have been made by Anya and her team with the rest being issued to ICU teams at various hospitals in London.

Infant Feeding Team's video wins award

A film made by our Infant Feeding Team has been awarded the JOHNSON'S® Excellence in Maternity Care and Innovation Award in the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) Annual Awards.

The video Colostrum Collection in Pregnancy: 'When to start and how to do it', shows those who are pregnant and attended one of our clinics, how to express their first breast milk (colostrum) by hand in the late stages of pregnancy, collect it using a syringe and then label and store it in a freezer at home ready to take to the hospital when they go into labour.

Known as 'liquid gold' due to its golden yellow colour, colostrum is the perfect food for new born babies because it is full of antibodies which help protect them from infections and also contains the perfect balance of carbohydrates, fats and proteins.

Colostrum collection, which was introduced by the Trust in 2010, is recommended if it is anticipated that the baby may experience difficulties with feeding or maintaining their blood sugar levels after birth, as the previously collected colostrum can then be used.



This is especially important for babies at risk of being born prematurely, if the parent has diabetes, or it is a twin pregnancy. It is also recommended in other circumstances, such as if the person is taking certain medications, has a raised BMI, has a breast abnormality or has had breast surgery, or found breastfeeding challenging in the past.

To watch the film visit the Trust's YouTube channel and search for Colostrum Collection in Pregnancy: 'When to start and how to do it'.

Meet the Team

When you think about those working in a hospital setting, first thoughts often focus on doctors and nurses. But there are many other exceptional people working alongside our frontline staff helping to ensure our patients receive outstanding care.

This feature shines a light on those members of staff who work behind the scenes, and gives you an insight into the work that they do.

In this issue we introduce dietitian Olly Howard who works in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at Maidstone Hospital.

Dietitians are qualified health professionals, who are regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), that assess and treat nutritional problems.

Olly Howard joined the Trust as a dietitian at Maidstone Hospital in March 2019 after completing a degree in Nutrition and Dietetics at King's College London. He said: "In hospitals, dietitians work closely with patients and other members of the medical team to deliver patient-centred, individualised nutritional care in both inpatient and outpatient settings.

"There are also many other roles that dietitians perform, such as community nutrition support, public health and policy guidance, media representation and working within the food industry. It really is a job that can take you anywhere!"

A team of nine dietitians and two dietetic assistants work across the Trust forming the acute dietetic team and there are also dedicated paediatric and oncology dietetic teams.

Olly explains the reasons why the role of a dietitian is so important within a hospital setting.

He said: "Many patients have increased nutritional requirements when in hospital yet their oral intake may be poor due to nausea, drowsiness or a problem with the gut to name a few causes. We work on all wards across the hospital from intensive care to frailty and everything in between.

"As acute dietitians, our primary focus is prevention and correction of malnutrition and this can be done through a range of interventions from food fortification advice to enteral (tube) feeding and in exceptional cases parenteral (intravenous) nutrition. We also deliver training to members of staff on nutrition and identifying patients with malnutrition through screening tools.



"Malnutrition can play a huge role in the outcome of a hospital stay for a patient. Evidence suggests that malnourished patients are more likely to spend longer in hospital, have a greater risk of repeat admissions and are also more likely to have poor outcomes. Through effective screening and referral to the dietitians when appropriate, malnourished patients can be identified and treated, thus reducing these risks. Think malnutrition, think dietitian!"

Olly added: "I absolutely love how varied the job can be. At MTW I see patients across multiple wards with a huge variety of different medical conditions which can individually or cumulatively impact on a person's nutritional status."



"Designing care plans around complex medical conditions can be very challenging, but hugely interesting and rewarding as well!"

Help us celebrate our nurses and midwives

To mark the 200th birth year of pioneering nurse Florence Nightingale, 2020 has been designated 'International Year of the Nurse and Midwife' by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The campaign, which runs until the end of the year, aims to shine a spotlight on the vital role nurses and midwives play within the NHS and never have they been needed more than now.

To celebrate we're inviting patients, past and present, as well as family members, to get involved by sharing their stories with us about how our nurses and midwives have had a positive impact or made an extraordinary contribution to their life. Those touching tales will then be shared by the Trust to help highlight the work carried out by more than 1,730 nurses and midwives currently employed by the Trust.

Chief Nurse Claire O'Brien said: "I, like many others here at the Trust, are extremely proud of our teams and the skills they bring to our wards and departments and this campaign will help give them the recognition they so rightly deserve."



People can share their stories by commenting on an existing post on the Trust's Facebook and Instagram accounts, or by tagging @MTWnhs on Twitter, and using the hashtags #YearOfTheNurseAndMidwife #mtw2020 #nurses #midwives

Strengthening our relationship with the Armed Forces community

MTW demonstrated its commitment to the Armed Forces community by signing the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) which outlines how the Trust will support those who have served, their families, reservists and veterans.

The commitments laid out in the covenant include:

- Promoting MTW as an Armed Forces-friendly organisation and publicising our Armed Forces Covenant on the MTW Trust website.
- Seeking to support the employment of veterans, young and old.
- Striving to support the employment of service spouses and partners.
- Endeavouring to offer a degree of flexibility in granting leave for service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment.
- Seeking to support our employees who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, including by accommodating their training and deployment where possible.

The Trust is already part of the 'Step into Health' programme, created by the NHS, in conjunction with 'Walking with the Wounded' and the 'Royal Foundation', which connects employers in the NHS to people from the Armed Forces community. It offers an access route into employment and career development opportunities.



"I owe the staff at Tunbridge Wells Hospital my life."



Covid-19 patient reunited with family

Gavin Wells spent five weeks on a ventilator fighting for his life after he contracted coronavirus.

But thanks to our incredible staff nursing him back to health, the dad of two is now back at home with his family.

He spoke to Patient First about how he owes his life to the medics who cared for him.

When Gavin Wells started suffering from flu like symptoms he followed the government's advice and self-isolated at his Tunbridge Wells home. But seven days later he took a turn for the worse.

The 55-year-old, who works in finance, said: "I became short of breath and my lips turned blue, so I dialled 111 which sent an ambulance that took me to Tunbridge Wells Hospital."

On arrival he was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), and placed on a ventilator for over five weeks whilst the Trust's team of specialists battled to save his life.

After coming off of ventilation, Gavin was moved to Ward 22 before finally being discharged 31 days after he was admitted. His wife Melinda and son Jamie greeted him on the day in the hospital reception before taking him home where he was also reunited with his daughter, Tabitha.

"It was very touch and go and very rocky – very rough," he said.

"I remember waking up to a very smiley face saying 'Hello I'm Dr. Griffiths, do you know where you are?' I couldn't speak so shook my head and he explained where I was and what had happened to me.

"The nurses were unbelievable. The quality of care in the NHS is like nothing I have ever seen - I don't think

people understand. When you are in ICU and have someone with you all the time, your every need is being met because you are incapable and they are keeping you alive. The level of care was just incredible."

Due to national guidelines at the time, Gavin's family were not allowed to visit him in hospital but the staff kept them updated regularly via phone and Skype calls. Gavin, who had previously only ever been in hospital for minor operations, added: "The staff did everything they could to help me keep in touch with family. I had photos sent in by my wife and the staff even took the time to stick them up on the rail of my bed, so that every time I looked up I could see my wife, my son and my daughter – always there in front of me.

"They really did go above and beyond for me and were inspiring with their positive attitude.

"I can't tell you how delighted I am to still be here because there were times my wife and children didn't think they would see me again – but now I am home. I owe the staff at Tunbridge Wells Hospital my life. They saved me with such care, grace and support and consistently going out of their way for not just myself but for all patients - they are awesome."

Wife Melinda said: "It really does feel like a miracle that he's home. I am just so profoundly grateful.

"The moment we picked him up from the hospital is just so difficult to describe, it was like I couldn't believe I was seeing him again. I felt such deep joy and gratitude.

"I will never be able to adequately thank the teams that saved Gavin's life – they are absolute heroes and such special, amazing people."

Thank you

Since the start of the pandemic the communities' generosity towards the Trust and its staff has known no bounds.

We have literally been inundated with kind donations - from food deliveries to glass artwork, knitted and plastic ear protectors to cakes, hand creams to special 'thank you' road markings at our hospital sites, and even balloon archways. The list is never ending.

There are so many individuals and businesses to thank that it would be impossible to name each and every person and company by name but rest assured our staff are extremely thankful. Knowing the public is supporting them every step of the way during these uncertain times has really helped to lift their spirits and keep them going whilst working on the frontline to fight against the virus and ensure our patients still receive the outstanding care they need and deserve.

Here we share with you a selection of photos of just some of the donations we've received over the last few months.

Words aren't enough to express our gratitude but even so, we'd still like to say a big thank you to everyone from all of us here at MTW!



Trust named top recruiter to Covid-19 research project

The Trust has been named one of the top recruiters to a new Covid-19 research study which aims to better understand the virus's varied effects on people and support the search for treatments.

Since joining the GenOMICC study, 14 patients have been recruited at Maidstone Hospital plus a further 40 from Tunbridge Wells Hospital - placing Tunbridge Wells Hospital in the top 20 recruiters to GenOMICC.

Researchers from the University of Edinburgh's GenOMICC project, who are working together with Genomics England and over 170 NHS hospitals, including MTW, hope to sequence the genomes of 20,000 people who have been severely ill with Covid-19. The data, collected by MTW and other Trusts, will be compared to that from a further 15,000 Covid-19 patients who experienced only mild symptoms.

This ground-breaking research may help explain why some patients with Covid-19 experience a mild infection, others require intensive care and why for some it is sadly fatal.

By discovering why some people are predisposed to developing life-threatening symptoms, the initiative will enable novel insights into the virus, as well as possible human factors that influence the effects of the disease, and whether a combination of both shape outcomes for NHS patients.



Tunbridge Wells Hospital is in the top 20 recruiters for the GenOMICC study



Miriam Davey, Critical Care Research Nurse in the Intensive Care Unit at Tunbridge Wells Hospital (pictured), said: "We are delighted to be supporting this ground-breaking research and pleased that we have already been able to recruit almost 60 patients from MTW into the study. We hope that the findings from this research will enable us to establish a better understanding of Covid-19 and ultimately lead to finding treatments to combat the disease."

Dr Kenneth Baillie, Chief Investigator on the GenOMICC study, said: "Our genes play a role in determining who becomes desperately sick with infections like Covid-19. Understanding these genes will help us to choose treatments for clinical trials."

"The GenOMICC study has been running since 2016, and has been investigating genetic factors that impact how patients fare in response to a number of severe illnesses."

"Since the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak, and with the tremendous support of the UK critical care community, the study has expanded and accelerated enormously, and we are now recruiting in over 170 ICUs across the country."

"I am delighted to be working with Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust to deliver this important work."

New nurse provides specialist care and support for young cancer patients

Young people with cancer from West Kent can now access specialist care and support from a new Teenage Cancer Trust nurse based at Maidstone Hospital.

Nurse Sarah Trollope is on hand to provide age-appropriate advice, care and extra emotional support for those aged 17-24 who are receiving their cancer treatment in the region.

Thanks to funding from leading global financial services firm Morgan Stanley as part of a two-year charity partnership, Teenage Cancer Trust is the only UK charity dedicated to providing specialised nursing care and support for young people with cancer.

Sarah, who's worked in oncology and haematology since 2004, said: "I've seen how younger patients can really struggle in adult settings, so I'm incredibly proud and excited that my new role will help change that."

"Cancer treatment in adult services can be really difficult for teenagers and young people for a whole range of reasons. For example, they can find

following complex treatment plans that often involve appointments at multiple hospitals, extremely challenging.

"Having cancer at a young age is particularly difficult emotionally. My new role means that I have more time to sit with them and listen to their worries and concerns, provide advice, and introduce them to other services that can help."

"In the future I'd love to start up local groups for young people so that they can meet others facing similar challenges."

Twiddle boards donated to Maidstone Hospital Stroke Unit

Tunbridge Wells Older People's Forum (TWOPF) and Tunbridge Wells Sherwood Men's Shed (TWMS) recently made and donated five twiddle boards to help patients in the Stroke Unit at Maidstone Hospital.

A twiddle board is a basic, table-top piece of equipment which is simply a square of wood attached with locks, bolts, hook and eye, chain lock, stopcock and light switches.

Physiotherapy and occupational therapy are key elements of the rehabilitation programme for patients recovering from a stroke. By using the twiddle boards, stroke patients are able to practise everyday tasks promoting improvements in strength and dexterity of the arm.

It's the second time TWOPF and TWMS have worked together to produce twiddle boards for MTW, having donated four twiddle boards to Tunbridge Wells Hospital in October 2018, to be used in rehabilitating patients with dementia.



Our Volunteers

We have more than 300 wonderful volunteers who give their time to our patients, visitors and staff.

Some volunteers are clearly visible and others blend into the background unseen, but all bring with them a wealth of life experience, care, dedication love and a warm smile!

In this edition of Patient First, we're shining a spotlight on one of our newest volunteers - 18 year old Lucy Dowd.

Where do you volunteer and how often?

I work at Maidstone Hospital three days a week and at the moment I am mainly based on the Volunteer Hub in reception.

Tell us more about your role...

The Hub is manned by volunteers who are there to help staff and patients by escorting patients to clinics, taking patient property to wards and generally being around to help out when needed.

I have also been volunteering in the Children's Outpatient clinic and Riverbank and have also been able to help out in the League of Friends shop too.

What's your background?

I am 18 and in Year 13 so I was supposed to have sat my A-Levels in the summer. I want to study Medicine at university. Hopefully I'm going to be starting in September.

How long have you been volunteering at MTW?

I started volunteering at the start of May.

Why did you want to volunteer at MTW?

I decided to volunteer as I wanted to do something useful and helpful during the pandemic. Due to my exams being cancelled I had a lot of free time and knew I could put it to good use. As a bonus it is also excellent experience for my future career!

What do you like best about volunteering?

I have really enjoyed volunteering, especially during the pandemic. It has given me something to do and look forward to and I find it very rewarding to know I am making a difference, even if it is only small.



What advice would you give to anyone considering volunteer work?

Volunteering is helpful, massively appreciated and really rewarding! Staff and patients are always so grateful for the help. I also think it can be a really good way to gain experience and build on skills such as communication. Everyone is so friendly; it's a lovely team to be a part of.

To find out how you can become a volunteer at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells hospitals:



01622 224719



mtw-tr.volunteers@nhs.net

Help us, help you

Get the right NHS treatment. If you're not sure what's best, phone before you go.

Self Care

NHS: Medical advice 24/7

Call 111 if you have an urgent medical problem and you are not sure what to do, or visit www.nhs.uk/111

Emotional support

Mental Health Matters confidential helpline
0800 107 0160

Stop Smoking Service

For free NHS support contact
0300 123 1220
www.oneyoukent.org.uk

GP And Dentist Out Of Hours

Call 111 if you need a GP or Dentist during the evening or at the weekend.

Pharmacy

Late night and Sunday Pharmacies

Maidstone

Link Pharmacy, 88a King Street, ME14 18H
01622 752990

Mon - Fri 6am - 11pm and Sat 6am - 9pm

Morrisons Pharmacy, Sutton Road, ME15 9NN
01622 661750

Mon - Fri 8.30am - 8pm, Sat 8.30am - 7pm
and Sun 10am - 4pm

Tesco Pharmacy, Lunsford Park, ME20 6RJ
01622 701449

Mon - Sat 8am - 8pm
and Sun 10am - 4pm

Medipharma, 13A Tonbridge Road, ME16 8RL
01622 750785

Mon - Fri 7am - 11pm, Sat 8am - 9pm
and Sun 10am - 5pm

Sevenoaks

Lloyds Pharmacy, Otford Road, TN14 5EG
01732 457017

Mon - Fri 6.30am - 10.30pm, Sat 6.30am - 9.30pm
and Sun 10am - 4pm

Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells

Boots, Calverley Road, TW1 2TE
01892 526486

Mon - Sat 8am - 7pm and Sun 10.30am - 4.30pm

East Street Pharmacy, 47 East Street, TN9 1LA
01732 770055

Mon - Sat 7am - 10pm and Sun 10am - 8pm

Lloyds Pharmacy, Linden Park Road, TN2 5QL
01892 517736

Mon - Fri 7am - 11pm, Sat 7am - 10pm and
Sun 10am - 4pm

Minor Injuries Units

Edenbridge Hospital, Mill Hill, TN8 5DA
01732 862137

Mon - Sun 8.30am - 6.30pm (closed Christmas Day)
X-ray available Wed and Fri 9.15am - 5pm

Sevenoaks Hospital, Hospital Road, TN13 3PG
01732 470200

Mon - Sun 8am - 8pm
X-ray available Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm (closed Bank Holidays)

Crowborough War Memorial Hospital

Southview Road, TN6 1HB
01892 603602

Mon - Sun 8am - 8pm (closed Christmas Day)

Visit www.nhs.uk for GP Practices offering a minor injuries service.

Emergency Care Centres And A&E

For critical or life-threatening emergencies call 999, or go to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A & E) which is open 24-hours a day.

Maidstone Hospital, Hermitage Lane, ME16 9QQ
01622 729000

Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Tonbridge Road, TN2 4QJ
01892 823535

Get The Right Care For Your Symptoms



Grazed knee
Sore throat
Coughs

Self Care



Headaches
Upset stomachs
Aches & pains

Pharmacy



Call 111 for
fast advice
& support

NHS 111



For symptoms that
don't seem to be
going away

GP Surgery



Urgent but not life
threatening
Sprains, Fractures
Minor burns

Urgent/Walk-in
Center

999

Unconsciousness
Severe breathing difficulty
Heavy bleeding

A&E
or 999