

# PATIENT first

**NHS**  
Maidstone and  
Tunbridge Wells  
NHS Trust

#Patientfirst

Autumn/Winter 2020



## P10

Find out how state-of-the-art  
technology is transforming the  
way we care for our patients.

# Welcome to Patient First!

As the pandemic continues, the last few months have certainly been a very busy time at the Trust.

We're pleased to tell you that our Emergency Department is now award-winning – turn to page 6 to find out more about this fantastic achievement.

In addition we've introduced a new state-of-the-art bed management system to ensure no patient has to wait for their treatment or care. Full details on page 10.

On page 3 we provide some useful tips on how to get essential items to patients on our wards and provide guidance on the measures we have in place across our sites to keep everyone safe. You can also read about the novel way staff working on the Woodlands Unit at Tunbridge Wells Hospital have been letting young patients know what they look like behind their mask.

The long awaited Covid-19 vaccine is covered on page 5 with details of who will be first in line to receive it.

Make sure you read pages 8 and 9 about the work of our incredible fundraisers and on page 18 we introduce you to one of our many amazing volunteers working in our hospitals.

We hope you enjoy this edition. Stay safe.

## The Patient First team

PS due to the pandemic this magazine is only available online. Visit [www.mtw.nhs.uk/patientfirst](http://www.mtw.nhs.uk/patientfirst)

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 Or visit [www.mtw.nhs.uk](http://www.mtw.nhs.uk)



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# Here to see you safely during the pandemic

To help keep everyone safe during the pandemic, the Trust has adapted its sites and services so it can continue to deliver high quality care and treatment to patients.

Additional safety measures, including strict infection prevention processes and social distancing, have been introduced across the Trust's hospitals. These include:

- Only asking patients who need to be seen face-to-face to attend hospital to reduce the number of people visiting at any one time. If needed a carer can accompany them.
- Changing our visitor policy to help reduce footfall on site (please check our website for the most up to date information).
- Taking the temperature of patients and visitors on arrival and asking about any possible symptoms.
- Patients, staff and carers asked to wear face masks and staff attending to patients wearing personal protective equipment.
- Reduced waiting room capacities and asking people to walk on the left of corridors.
- Installing sanitisation stations and asking patients and visitors to sanitise their hands before entering our sites.
- Cleaning equipment and clinical areas thoroughly before and after seeing patients.
- Establishing green zones and pathways for non Covid patients with Covid-19 confirmed or suspected patients treated in different areas.
- Carrying out video consultation appointments - where it is clinically appropriate.



We want to reassure patients attending our hospitals that they should continue to come for treatment unless they are told otherwise. It is very important in particular for patients undergoing treatment for cancer to continue to attend their appointments and we assure them it is safe to do so.

Relatives, friends and carers can still get essential items to their loved ones who have been admitted to our hospitals during the pandemic.

Patient property can be accepted by The Hub, located in the main reception area of both hospital sites, between the hours of 10am and 3.30pm 7 days a week. Unfortunately we are unable to accept patient property outside of these times.

If you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do, please visit [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk) or call 111. The service is available 24 hours a day seven days a week and the call handlers will ensure you get the right treatment in the right place in a more timely way.



## This is me - behind the mask

Staff working on Woodlands Unit at Tunbridge Wells Hospital have a novel way of letting the children they treat see their faces without the need to remove their mask—they each wear a badge showing their faces normally.

Lead Matron Jackie Tyler came up with the idea and it's proving to be a conversation starter for the children with many of them commenting on what the nurse really looks like underneath their mask.



## Flowers planted in recognition of key workers across the borough

Everyone from teachers, supermarket staff, volunteers, NHS staff, the emergency services and council teams have been doing an amazing job as they continue to work during Covid-19.

Communities have also pulled together, from collecting shopping and medicines for those shielding to people standing on their doorsteps clapping for key workers to show their appreciation for all their hard work.

To ensure the borough's response to the pandemic is recognised year after year, Maidstone Hospital and Maidstone Borough Council have joined forces to create a rainbow bulb garden and wild-flower meadow.

The council's Grounds Maintenance and Park team prepared the ground and planted over 18,000 bulbs at the front of Maidstone Hospital which will bloom in spring – around the anniversary of the start of the pandemic, and the wild-flower meadow will be in bloom throughout the summer. The gardens will add colour and help attract bees and other wildlife.



Miles Scott, Chief Executive of Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, said: "I am extremely proud of the way our staff responded to the pandemic and I know they have been very grateful for all the help and support they have received from the local community.

"Planting a rainbow bulb garden and a wild-flower meadow is a wonderful way of marking the pandemic in the long term."

## Choir records song to thank the community for its support during the pandemic

A song to thank the community for supporting key workers during the pandemic has been released by the Trust's choir.

The 14 members, who all work for MTW, recorded their version of John Farnham's 'You're the Voice' which they not only renamed 'You've Been Great' but also added some alternative Covid related lyrics to as well.

They then used handheld devices and computers to record themselves singing individually so the footage could be edited together for the final video performance which was supported by SingingNation, who partner with MTW NHS Trust to run the choir.

Consultant Paediatric Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon, Rantimi Ayodele, who formed MTW NHS



Trust's choir, and features in the video, said: "The Trust's CEO Miles Scott encouraged the choir to record the song after he praised us for the cover version of Michael Jackson's hit song 'Beat it' back in May, and suggested we compile a song to thank the community for all their support.

"Covid has changed the landscape of life for all of us but the public's support for key workers has been inspirational and it has helped keep the staff at MTW going during these challenging times.

"This song is our way of saying 'thank you'."

To watch the video visit <https://bit.ly/2Jntrg4>

# Covid-19 vaccine

Covid-19 vaccines will be offered to around one million adults in Kent and Medway.

People will be contacted when the vaccine is available for them. This will take several months so please be patient. Please do not phone GP surgeries or other NHS services with general queries about when you will be able to get the vaccine.

The NHS will offer the vaccine first to those at highest risk of catching the infection and of suffering serious complications if they catch the infection. This includes older adults, frontline health and social care workers, care home residents and staff, and those with certain clinical conditions. When more vaccines become available, the vaccines will be offered to other people at risk as soon as possible.

The vaccine will be offered in age order to:

- those aged over 80 years
- those aged over 75 years
- those aged over 70 years
- adults on the NHS shielded patient list
- those aged over 65 years
- adults under 65 years with long term conditions (a full list is included in national guidance).
- Those aged 50-64 will be offered it later.

More information can be found on the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group's website - [www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk](http://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk)



## Trust launches flu immunisation programme for pregnant people

MTW has started offering pregnant people the flu vaccine when they attend ultrasound and antenatal clinics at its hospital sites as well as its birth centres based in Maidstone and Crowborough.

In the first three weeks of the programme being rolled out in November, staff had vaccinated over 150 people and an additional 96 vaccines against whooping cough were also given.

Catching flu is more than a cough, sore throat and runny nose and for pregnant people, it can cause serious complications including pneumonia and can increase the risk of a premature birth and low birth weight.

Pregnancy naturally weakens the body's immune system, which means flu can cause complications for pregnant people as they are less able to fight off infections, increasing the risk of them and their unborn baby becoming ill.

The flu vaccine can be given safely at any stage of pregnancy. As antibodies are passed onto the developing baby during pregnancy getting vaccinated means you can also help to protect your baby after birth.

The Trust is now looking to widen the immunisation service so it can offer the flu vaccination to other in and out patients who are eligible for the vaccine, including those who are clinically at risk and patients aged 50 and over.





# Emergency Department honoured in NHS Parliamentary Awards 2020



We're pleased to tell you that our Emergency Department (ED) has been crowned the South East Regional Winner in The Excellence in Urgent and Emergency Care Award category of the NHS Parliamentary Awards 2020.

The department will now go head to head with other winners from across the country to be judged by a national panel made up of senior leaders representing staff and patients, for the chance to win the prestigious national award which will be presented at a special ceremony in the House of Commons on the 7 July 2021.

Our ED, which operates at Maidstone Hospital and Tunbridge Wells Hospital, was nominated for the award by MP Helen Grant for the considerable improvements made by the department to support patient and staff care during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The key areas of focus have been:

- Setting up a front door streaming team on both sites 24/7 to assess patients on arrival.
- Redesigning both EDs using outpatient space and moving paediatric patients to a safer environment, putting up walls to segregate areas to establish green (non Covid) / amber (low risk Covid) / red (Covid positive) pathways to ensure all patients and staff are safe.
- Focusing on improved discharge planning across the system to ensure there is no increase in length of stay for inpatients.
- Ensuring patients, where clinically appropriate, are re-directed to other services such as Minor Injury Units, Pharmacy stores or their GP.
- Creating dedicated side rooms across the Trust for Covid-19 positive patients.
- Focusing on staff welfare and increasing the number of staff break out areas.
- Continuing to see and either admit or discharge more than 95% of patients attending the emergency departments within the four hour national standard.

Chief of Service for the Medicine and Emergency Care Division, Dr Laurence Maiden, Consultant Physician and Gastroenterologist, said: "This award category seeks to celebrate the amazing work of our emergency care services across the country so we are incredibly proud of making the official shortlist.

"It has been a difficult year and the pandemic has seen the staff working in our emergency departments step up to the challenge, adapting work spaces and work practices to ensure patients are provided with the very best possible care and that they are treated safely at all times, as well as keeping staff safe. This has been evident in all areas throughout the Trust and I'm extremely proud of the team.

"Winning the south east award demonstrates that all their hard work and dedication has not gone unnoticed and it has certainly helped to give them a real morale boost."

## Did you know...

For the last year MTW has been one of the best performing trusts in the country for emergency care but for the first time ever it was rated the best performing trust for emergency care in the country in the seven days up to Wednesday 16 September 2020.



# Case Study

**MTW has pulled out all the stops to keep cancer services going by putting safety measures in place so people can access them safely throughout the pandemic.**

**Tess Powderham, who was seen and treated within three weeks of finding a lump, spoke to Patient First about her experience.**

Whilst taking a shower following a vigorous 25-mile walk, Tess Powderham discovered a lump about the size of a golf ball under one armpit.

"It wasn't there the day before so my first thought was that it was a cyst," she said.

After calling her GP, Tess was invited in to the surgery at 8.30am the next day. Following an examination she was immediately referred to Tunbridge Wells Hospital where she underwent an ultrasound the same day.

Unhappy with the results of the scan, the radiologist arranged for a biopsy to be taken there and then, followed by a CT scan half an hour later.

The 58-year-old, from Groombridge, said: "As an ex-nurse and midwife I was keen to know what the medics were thinking. By this time the word cancer had been mentioned. Just six hours later my GP called me to say that the results showed a 90% likelihood of lymphoma.

"I work as an Events Co-ordinator and a Mountain Leader so I'm fit and healthy and there's no family history of cancer so I never considered it could be that. It came completely out of the blue."

Two days later the married mother of three was invited back to the hospital to see a Consultant Haematologist face-to-face. It was during that appointment that Tess was told she would need to undergo R-CHOP chemotherapy which could result in her losing her hair.

After undergoing a Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scan, which produces a detailed three-dimensional image of the inside of the body, and a bone marrow biopsy, Tess was diagnosed with Stage 3 high grade Non-Hodgkins lymphoma. By now the lump under her arm was the size of half an avocado and she had multiple swellings in her neck and groin.

Exactly 21 days after finding the lump Tess started 24 weeks of chemotherapy treatment at Tunbridge Wells Hospital's Haematology and Oncology Day Unit.

"If there is ever a good time to have cancer then this has probably been it," she said.



"The precautions taken by the hospital such as wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), carrying out Covid-19 tests ahead of appointments, taking people's temperature on arrival, the social distancing measures that were in place, and being asked to wait in my car to be called for blood tests, all helped to set my mind at ease that it was safe to attend hospital.

"The care I received has been excellent – timely, well informed, caring, thoughtful and thorough. Without exception all of the staff have been first class. My GP surgery was also superb, putting me on their TLC list with almost instant access to a Doctor.

"My message to anyone who may be concerned about cancer is don't ignore your symptoms, it won't make them go away. If my experience is anything to go by I wouldn't hesitate to be seen and treated. The NHS staff are aware of the infection risks and precautions are taken by everyone every step of the way.

"Obviously I hope and pray that I am now cancer free but, if I'm not, I know I am in good hands."

## Did you know...

- **From August 2019 - October 2020, the Trust hit the national standard for treating at least 85% of cancer patients within 62 days of being referred by a GP.**
- **From September 2019 - October 2020 MTW met the two week wait referral target meaning 93% of patients with suspected cancer are being seen at MTW within 14 days of a referral from their GP.**



# Fundraising



Thanks to our incredible fundraisers we've been able to support both patients and staff throughout this challenging year. From medical equipment for Intensive Care Units and resources such as books, to enhanced staff facilities and hydrotherapy aids, we are proud of the difference that donations have made.

As a member of 'NHS Charities Together,' the membership organisation representing over 240 NHS charities, we are grateful to our many supporters.

I hope you enjoy reading our latest Fundraising update.

Laura Kennedy  
Fundraising Manager

**MTW**  
Exceptional people,  
outstanding care



## Support our Covid heroes



Our staff have worked tirelessly throughout Covid-19 caring for patients from all backgrounds.

Supporting staff health and wellbeing is a key focus for the charity. We need your help to create a new purpose-built staff shower and changing room area at Maidstone Hospital. This project will revamp an outdated structure and includes installation of new walls, modern wet rooms, pipework, flooring and decoration. It will also provide improvements to the heating and water infrastructure to ensure that staff enjoy warm and relaxing facilities.

You can donate via [www.justgiving.com/campaign/teamMTW](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/teamMTW) or text NHSXMAS to 70085 to donate £10. Texts cost £10 plus one standard message rate.



### Trio raise £1,000

A cancer patient took on the virtual London Marathon in October and raised over £1,000, despite receiving chemotherapy treatment.

Andy Holman, from Tunbridge Wells, was joined by partner Karen and his son Ben on a cold, wet and stormy Sunday to pound the streets of Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells.

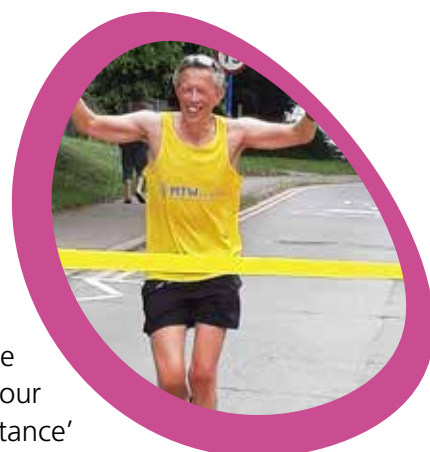
His challenge raised funds for #TeamMTW and Macmillan Cancer Support following the 'fantastic care' he received from the Trust. Well done to our star trio!

### 'Go The Distance' raises £20,0000

Thanks to our incredible individuals and teams, our brand new 'Go the Distance' event raised over £20,000!

You pounded the pavements, got on your bikes, set up fundraising pages and braved the weather so a huge thank you to everyone who took part. Our Chief Executive even ran a staggering 28.75 miles to support the event.

If you'd like to take on a 2021 'Go The Distance' challenge please get in touch.







## Freemasons donation benefits cancer patients

A donation of £11,621 from the East and West Kent Freemason Provinces is benefiting prostate cancer patients by funding additional medical equipment, including an additional IsoLoader as part of the Trust's prostate brachytherapy service.

Prostate LDR (Low Dose Rate) seed brachytherapy is a treatment for localised prostate cancer that involves permanently implanting the prostate gland with radioactive seeds. Their short-range radioactivity treats the cancer in the prostate only, minimising radiation to nearby organs.

Rather than inserting 100 or so seeds individually, needles, each containing a row of radioactive seeds within a fine plastic strand, are implanted swiftly under ultrasound guidance. During brachytherapy, the IsoLoader is used in the sterile operating theatre to safely assemble bespoke strands of radioactive seeds to optimise the radiation dose throughout the individual prostate gland. Maidstone was the first hospital in Europe to use the IsoLoader.



## Donation for bereavement books

A huge 'roarsome' thanks to the Mallings Lions Club for donating £300 to purchase a selection of bereavement books to support children.

These new resources will help children to better understand death and cope with the resulting emotions. The project was led by Neve Mann, End of Life Care Clinical Nurse Specialist.

Special thanks to Chris Harker, Senior Information Analyst (Cancer Services), for his support.

## We've got a new website!



You can now keep up to date with all the latest information about what the charity is up to via our new website.

Visit [www.mtwcharity.org.uk](http://www.mtwcharity.org.uk)

## Support us your way

- Select our charity when shopping via 'AmazonSmile'
- Try a sponsored fitness or healthy living challenge
- Take on a winter 'Go The Distance' challenge
- Nominate us to be your group or company's charity of the year

Don't forget to follow us on social media  
@mtwcharity



# New bed management system ensures no patient waits to receive care or treatment

Here at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust our mission is that no patient should have to wait to receive the care they need.

In order to achieve this, we've created a new Care Co-ordination Centre which uses state-of-the-art technology, designed by TeleTracking, which provides real-time visibility of the available beds across our hospital sites (Maidstone Hospital and Tunbridge Wells Hospital). This allows the centre to manage patient flow (the way we move patients in and out of beds) more effectively ensuring we provide patients with the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

To ensure beds are available as soon as patients are discharged from our care, we've also recruited a new Bed Turnaround Team. Located at each site the team are responsible for cleaning the bed and bed space, checking the mattress and making the bed so it is ready for the next patient. The team then send an update via a handheld mobile device to the Care Co-ordination Centre telling them the bed is available for use. The centre then allocates the bed to a patient and sends a message to the portering team so a porter can take the next patient to the available bed.

MTW is the fourth acute NHS Trust in the country to use the system which brings enormous benefits to both staff and patients. Not only does this new way of working ensure no patient has to wait for the care or treatment they need, it also means our clinical staff have more time to care and spend with our patients as they no longer need to make beds or make numerous phone calls to domestics and porters and site teams.

Below we answer some of the questions you might have about the new bed management system.

## What does this mean for me?

When you're admitted for an inpatient stay to one of our hospitals a member of staff will attach a digital wristband to your wrist in the same way they do a patient name band.



## How will this help me as a patient?

Wearing the digital wristband connects you to our system and allows our Care Co-ordination Centre to allocate you a bed in the right area of clinical speciality ensuring you get the right care in the right place at the right time.

You will only wear the digital wristband whilst you are staying with us. When you are ready to go home the digital wristband will be removed by a member of staff and placed in a drop box. This then automatically discharges you on our system and notifies the Care Co-ordination Centre that your bed is now ready to be cleaned by our dedicated Bed Turnaround Team ahead of the next patient being admitted on to the ward.



More information can be found in our Patient Leaflet which is available via our website [www.mtw.nhs.uk](http://www.mtw.nhs.uk)



# The gift of sight

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented many challenges across the NHS, including organ and tissue donation. There are currently half as few corneas available than are needed for patients in the UK. More donors are urgently needed to enable sight-saving surgery to take place and to make a lasting difference to people's lives.

**Eric Watson, 78, from Loose, spoke to Patient First about how a cornea transplant carried out by Ophthalmology Consultant Mr Mohamed Elalfy saved his sight.**

## What eye condition did you have that required treatment?

The eye condition I had that required treatment is Fuchs Corneal Endothelial Dystrophy – it's typically a condition causing weak corneal cells which gets worse with age or after cataract surgery, causing the cornea to cloud over and reduce vision.

## What procedure was carried out to remedy the condition?

The procedure to remedy this condition is a corneal graft.

## When did you undergo treatment at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust?

I received treatment for this condition in July 2020.

## How long did it take to recover from the operation?

Special care was needed during the early days to allow the graft time to settle – it took about two-three weeks for the graft to settle completely.

## How has the operation impacted your life?

The impact of the operation is immeasurable to be honest! It has had a hugely positive impact on my life, increasing my confidence particularly regarding driving, reading and enabling me to enjoy all the different colours outside and in my garden.



## What have been the greatest benefits to you following the operation?

I think the greatest benefit of the operation is being able to see everything far more clearly. I can now read very small type whereas beforehand I could only read with this eye using a 3 x magnifying glass. I am very grateful for the considerable skills of Mr Elalfy and his excellent team for looking after me so well. I am also indebted to the extremely generous gift of a cornea from a donor and the person's family.

## Did you know...

The law around organ donation has now changed in England?



All adults are now considered as having agreed to donate their own organs when they die, unless they record a decision not to donate, are in one of the excluded groups or have told their family that they don't want to donate.

You can find out more by visiting: [organdonation.nhs.uk](https://organdonation.nhs.uk)





# Meet the Team

The Ophthalmology department at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust is the largest specialised eye unit in the South-East of England, serving a total population of 1 million.

Ophthalmic subspecialties provided at MTW include Cornea, Glaucoma, Retina, Cataract, Paediatric and Neuro-ophthalmology, whilst the Oculoplastics team deal with eyelid malposition, lumps and tumours amongst many others.

From 1 December 2020, our ophthalmology service has expanded to include provision for North Kent patients who previously accessed ophthalmology services via Darent Valley Hospital.

In this issue, we talk to Sarju Athwal, Consultant Ophthalmologist and Oculoplastic Surgeon at MTW.

## Tell us about your role

My role specifically is to assess patients with eyelid problems, work out the diagnosis and then determine a management plan. A typical clinic day might involve seeing new referrals from GPs, our Emergency Department or opticians with an eyelid problem. I conduct an examination of the eyelids, eyes and the surrounding face, and then confirm a diagnosis with the patient. If I'm in theatre that day, it might involve operating on patients with droopy eyelids, watery eyes or skin tumours to the eyelids/periorcular area.

## How many patients do you see each year?

Within Oculoplastics, we see on average over 3,500 patients per year but the Ophthalmology department as a whole treated almost 26,000 new patients and over 66,000 patients for follow up appointments last year.

## What's the best thing about the role?

Many oculoplastic problems - such as droopy eyelids or watery eyes - are often seen as low priority since they don't damage the eye or vision. However, they can be quite debilitating to the patient and affect their daily life - from interfering with their reading, to stopping them being able to drive. Many of these conditions can change the appearance of the face, which can affect the patients' well-being and sense of self.

It is extremely satisfying to see patients with these problems, be able to diagnose the cause and offer



them an operation to address this, and then be able to see the change in their quality of life post-op.

## What changes have been made to the service due to the pandemic?

In Oculoplastics we were very lucky to have Trust support in setting up video consultations meaning we were the first subspecialty at MTW to pioneer the use of these in Ophthalmology. This allowed us to accurately diagnose many eyelid problems remotely and start people on the appropriate treatment. It meant we could identify patients who might need urgent surgery when theatres reopened. It even meant we could list some patients directly for theatre without needing an outpatient visit. This reduced the number of hospital visits, and patients' risk of exposure to the virus.

The virtual appointments have proved very popular with our patients and we have received very positive feedback to date.

## Have you any new plans for the service?

I am in the process of reorganising my clinics at Maidstone Hospital to incorporate video and telephone consultations permanently. This will allow a mix of appointment types, depending on the patient's condition, and will result in more efficiencies for the patients in terms of appointment waiting times and when attending appointments. It will also help us deliver on the NHS Long Term Plan's aim of reducing outpatient activity by 30% by increased use of technology.



## New purpose built Surgical Assessment Unit

We've opened a new Surgical Assessment Unit (SAU) at Tunbridge Wells Hospital as part of our ongoing commitment to ensure patients access emergency care services in a prompt and timely way.

SAU, which was based inside the hospital, is now located in a new modular building adjacent to the Emergency Department (ED). The move forms part of the Trust's plans to enhance its Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) pathway so that more patients can benefit.

The acute unit, which is operational 24 hours a day seven days a week, assesses patients who have been referred by their GP or ED because it is felt they need a surgeon to assess their condition. Staff on the unit will then carry out tests and investigations to see what treatment is required. Patients who do not require

immediate surgical care may be discharged home possibly with an outpatient follow up, asked to attend the Surgical Day Assessment Unit or referred to a different specialty for further assessment. Those who need to stay in hospital will be transferred to a bed on an in-patient ward.

Inside, the unit houses a waiting area, a clinic room, and a procedure room complete with an ultrasound machine.

It will be staffed by a Senior Surgical Doctor, who will be based on the unit at all times, Nurses and Clinical Support Workers (CSWs). A receptionist will staff the desk Monday to Friday between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

## MTW shortlisted for HSJ Awards

The Trust has been shortlisted for Acute or Specialist Trust of the Year at the national 2020 HSJ Awards.

We've made huge progress over the past year and implemented a range of patient and staff-centred initiatives to improve the care and services we provide. We've also come out of Financial Special Measures thanks to robust plans to boost financial sustainability and introduced new ideas and ways of working to make the flow of patients through our hospitals more efficient.

As a result of all our staff's hard work we are now one of the best performing Trusts in the country for emergency care and cancer services.

Miles Scott, Chief Executive, said: "We have done so much in the past 12 months to put our patients



first in everything we do and our staff at the heart of our hospitals. We are committed to delivering improved outcomes for our patients, and to be chosen among the other incredible nominees is a wonderful achievement. This nomination is a tremendous boost to staff at MTW and I am sure it will bolster our continued efforts to improve our services."

# Airline crew, students and retired healthcare professionals help MTW deliver first class service



Five furloughed cabin crew members who joined the Trust in May as volunteers have moved from the skies and joined the MTW family permanently.

They arrived at the Trust as part of the Project Wingman initiative which saw over 40 furloughed and grounded cabin crew volunteers providing staff with a luxury space to rest and recharge before, during and after shifts.

Since taking on their new role they have worked within the Ultrasound Department, Estates and Facilities

teams, as well as helping with some of the new projects implemented during the pandemic.

In addition, over 100 students joined MTW through the student paid placement deployment scheme organised by Health Education England and 14 healthcare professionals, who had long since stepped back or retired from providing patient care, also returned to work at MTW by gaining temporary professional registrations. Many of these individuals continue to work for the Trust to provide vital support so we can ensure we continue to deliver outstanding care to our patients.

Cheryl Lee, Director of Workforce, said: "We are extremely grateful to all members of the Project Wingman team, students and retired healthcare professionals who have joined us and provided vital support during the ongoing pandemic.

"We are delighted to be able to welcome a number of these individuals as substantive members of staff and I know they will continue to make a great contribution to the work we undertake here at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust."

## Specialist endoscopic swallowing equipment arrives at Tunbridge Wells Hospital

A new Fibreoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing Equipment (FEES) has arrived at Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

It means patients have rapid access to the most effective assessment of swallowing dysfunctions which can occur following conditions such as a stroke, degenerative illness, pneumonia or cancer.

The new equipment enables patients to be analysed without having to undergo radiation treatment and can be easily adapted to accommodate children too. FEES has already been put to good use within the Intensive Care Unit at Tunbridge Wells Hospital, supporting ventilated patients and helping with their care and recovery.

Funding of the equipment, which came from Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS (MTW) Charitable



Fund, also included training for speech and language therapists at MTW to support their professional development and to enable our staff to continue to deliver an excellent level of patient care.





## Sign up to Recurrent Pregnancy Loss research study

Suffering a miscarriage is devastating but when it keeps happening it can lead to questions such as 'why me?'

In a bid to try and understand the cause of Recurrent Pregnancy Loss (RPL), and to help find effective treatment, those aged 18 to 51 who have experienced RPL – with no known genetic cause, are being asked to take part in a pilot study. It is being carried out by the Trust, which is research active, in collaboration with the University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE).

People of the same age range who have had a healthy pregnancy are also invited to take part in the study as part of a control group. Every year around 6,000 babies are delivered with the help and support of MTW staff either at Maidstone Birth Centre, Crowborough Birthing Centre or Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

Volunteers will be asked to fill in a consent form and a questionnaire about their health and lifestyle, both of which they will need to bring with them when they are invited for a blood sample to be taken at the Women and Children's Centre at Tunbridge Wells Hospital. During the appointment they will also be asked to fill in a form about past/current medical and reproductive history. Information provided will be completely anonymised for the study which runs until April 2021.

Free hospital parking is available for research appointments and free tea/coffee and biscuits offered to participants after a blood sample is taken.

The European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) 2018, published that about 15% of all pregnancies are miscarried, and of this

percentage, 2-3% represents Recurrent Pregnancy Loss (RPL) of unknown cause.

Robert Reilly, Blood Transfusion Manager for Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust who is leading on the study on behalf of the Trust, said: "For many people, the cause of this loss is unknown but if simple blood markers could be found that show risk of pregnancy loss, perhaps more helpful preventative treatment could be given to help people maintain their pregnancy.

"Whilst we cannot promise that taking part in the study will benefit the volunteers personally, they may find it satisfying that they have played a part in much needed clinical research into an area of health that causes considerable despair to a number of people and indeed their partners.

"The research may also help medical science develop better understanding of the causes of this type of pregnancy loss for those who struggle to complete pregnancy either by natural or assisted means. It may also inform clinical investigations as well as find new therapies and possibly improve the psychological impact that this sad event has on people's lives."

**For more information  
or to take part in the study:**

✉ [rreilly@nhs.net](mailto:rreilly@nhs.net)

☎ 07711070619 or 01622 227124



## Doctor creates game to help future medics

A Doctor based at our Tunbridge Wells Hospital has created a game to help future medics sharpen their diagnostic thinking and history taking skills.

'Essential Diagnosis' was developed by Dr Chris Baker in his final year at Cardiff University's School of Medicine.

The role-play board game, which simulates a conversation between a clinician and a patient, is now being produced commercially by Focus Games, creators of 'serious' games that change thinking and behaviour.

Chris said he came up with the idea for Essential Diagnosis after attending an informative communication skills workshop at Cardiff University which inspired him to create an interactive learning opportunity for himself and other medics to practice for their final exams and future careers.

After developing a prototype, he tested the game on fellow students who responded positively. Students also showed measurable improvements in diagnostic thinking skills after engaging with the game for 60 minutes.

Dr Baker took his idea to the South East Wales Academic Health Science Partnership (SEWAHSP), which provided funding and support to get the game off the ground.

Aimed at junior Doctors and Advanced Nurse Practitioners, the first edition of Essential Diagnosis deals with three key symptoms, supported by a wide range of differentials - breathlessness, chest pain and loss of consciousness.



## Consultant receives achievement award

Consultant Gynaecological Pathologist Dr Mike Coutts has received an achievement award by the Royal College of Pathologists (RCPATH) for outstanding work in the Republic of Moldova.

He was originally approached in 2016 by joint representation from the United Nations, the International Cervical Cancer Prevention Association and RCPATH to provide assistance in setting up cervical cancer screening in Moldova, where the disease is the leading cause of cancer mortality in women.

Since then his work has involved several visits to Moldova with assessment and reorganisation of pathology laboratories together with running training courses for Moldovan pathologists. He also trained two Moldovan pathologists at Maidstone Hospital for several months and continues to provide remote online training.

Dr Coutts' work has effectively raised the standard of gynaecological pre-cancer and cancer diagnosis in Moldova which is a key component of an integrated screening programme.



# JAG accreditation awarded to high-quality endoscopy services

JAG accreditation has been awarded to the Trust for its high-quality gastrointestinal endoscopy services. It also received high praise from the Joint Advisory Group (JAG), following its recent review.

MTW's endoscopy team was particularly commended for its positive approach, investment in delivering improvements to the endoscopy service and commitment to providing a high quality service for patients.

The team of 60 staff, which comprises a group of clinical specialists, doctors and nurses who specialise in gastroenterology, surgery and nurse-led endoscopy, operate endoscopy services at both Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells hospitals. Last year it performed 23,103 endoscopy procedures across both sites.

Dr Hemant Sharma, Clinical Lead at MTW, said: "We are delighted to have been awarded this accreditation for our endoscopy services.

"The team works tirelessly to ensure we deliver the very highest standards of safe and effective care for our patients so it is fantastic to be recognised with this quality standard. It's a huge achievement for the team."

The JAG accreditation scheme has four assessment areas: clinical quality, patient experience, workforce and training. Accredited services are required to submit evidence annually to demonstrate that they are continuing to meet the standards and have a five-yearly on-site assessment.



## Tipping the scales in our favour

Rebecca Lawrence, Supt. Radiographer at Tunbridge Wells Hospital, recently won the Trust a Patient Transfer Scale after she entered a competition run by the Marsden Weighing Group earlier this year.



Invented by an A&E Nurse, the transfer slide has a built in weighing scale which can weigh time critical or immobile patients quickly and easily during transfers. Getting a weight reading is particularly important when medication or treatment needs to be administered fast. The more accurate the weight reading, the more accurate the drug dosage and the more effectively the patient can be treated. Gaining an accurate weight for a patient is also required as part of the five MUST (Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool) steps, to identify adults who are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition.

The new piece of equipment will now be used by the Frailty Unit at Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

## Garden makeover



A garden used by stroke patients as part of their rehabilitation process has been given a new lease of life thanks to an army of volunteers and generous donations from the local community.

Hannah's Garden, at Maidstone Hospital, was originally created seven years ago after former stroke patient Hannah Green raised £5,000 to transform what was then a small grassy area next to the Stroke Unit, into a tranquil space so patients had somewhere quiet to either sit and enjoy the sunshine, or have some of their physiotherapy sessions outside.

Now back to its former glory the garden was re-opened by Hannah during a small, socially-distanced opening ceremony.



## 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 Anett West.

### Where do you volunteer?

I volunteer at Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

### Tell us more about your volunteer role...

I help run the Volunteer Hub located in the main reception area of the hospital. We provide help and support to patients as they arrive and staff, especially when visiting restrictions are in place. I will also help with inpatients' feedback on wards as soon as restrictions allow it.

### How often do you volunteer?

As often as I can - sometimes five days a week.

### How long have you been volunteering for the Trust?

Since May 2020.

### What's your background?

I run my own catering business.

### Why did you want to volunteer at MTW?

Unfortunately due to the pandemic and lockdown restrictions I had to close the businesses. I wanted to put my time to good use and thought volunteering was a good way to do this.

### What do you like best about volunteering?

It is very rewarding to know that I make a difference to both the patients and hospital staff.

### What advice would you give to anyone considering volunteer work?

Don't hesitate to apply. It's one of the best things I've ever done.



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



01622 224719



mtw-tr.volunteers@nhs.net

## NHS Volunteer Responders needed

If you live in England you can support your NHS and help to save lives by becoming an NHS Volunteer Responder.

The volunteers help people who are vulnerable to the virus to stay well by staying at home. They also directly support the NHS by delivering equipment and supplies, providing patient transport, and directing patients at NHS sites

Volunteer safety is central to the scheme and NHS Volunteer Responders do not come into direct contact with Covid-19 patients.

Details of the volunteer roles and a sign-up link can be found on the NHS Volunteer Responders website - <https://nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk>



# 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](http://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](http://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](http://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



# JUST THINK 111 FIRST

When you think you need A&E,  
contact NHS 111 by phone or online.

