

WINTER
2021

NHS

William Harvey • Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother
Kent and Canterbury • Buckland • Royal Victoria

East Kent
Hospitals University
NHS Foundation Trust

YOUR hospitals

your health



**Recovering
from Covid:**
**Our support service
for Covid survivors**

Tried and tested:
**Virtual appointments
help keep everyone safe**

Centre of excellence:
**Inside the new surgical centre
dedicated to orthopaedic operations**

We care

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Published December 2021
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Expanding our critical care capacity



Elevation View 1

Some of our sickest patients will benefit from a brand new, state-of-the-art critical care unit at William Harvey Hospital.

The new two-storey, 24-bed unit, is being built next to Kennington and Richard Stevens wards, thanks to a successful bid to secure £14 million national NHS investment.

Robotic surgery now used to treat mouth and throat cancer



A state-of-the-art surgical robot is now helping to treat even more patients, including people with cancer in their mouth or throat.

Head and neck surgeons have undergone extensive training in the UK, France, and Belgium, to be able to operate the £1.5million Da Vinci robot at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital, which is normally used for operations on the prostate, bladder or kidneys.

Additional equipment bought with the help of the hospital's

League of Friends means the device can now be used to remove tumours in the head and neck.

The procedures involve minimally invasive surgery through the patient's mouth, rather than the traditional method of breaking their jaw to gain access.

Former aluminium factory worker Robert Jones, from Folkestone, was one of the first to undergo surgery with the robot to treat cancer in his throat.

He was first diagnosed with cancer in 2008 and has had

numerous procedures involving laser treatment since then.

Mr Jones, 69, said: "It started with a lump on my tongue, and I've been fighting it ever since.

"I've had my lymph nodes removed and laser work which has been unbelievably painful.

"This time, with the robot, I was able to eat an hour after the operation – previously after laser surgery it could be two or three days, even with strong painkillers.

"I am very pleased and I feel very hopeful that this time they might have been able to get it all."

Robotic surgery is quicker than traditional procedures and allows patients to avoid open surgery. It allows surgeons to see 3D high definition images from inside the body, and instruments can be manoeuvred precisely to reach difficult areas. This results in fewer complications, less external scarring, faster post-operative recovery and earlier discharge home.



Robert Jones

Covid-19 research passes important milestone

A Kent-based study investigating a treatment for Covid-19 has recruited its 100th participant.

East Kent Hospitals researchers are testing whether Sambucol Black Elderberry liquid - a popular herbal remedy available in many health food shops - is an effective treatment for the virus.

The study is the first in the country investigating black elderberry liquid as a treatment and has been adopted by the National Institute for Health Research.

Previous research found black elderberry fruit or extracts had antiviral properties against flu and a type of herpes.

Ms Jessica Evans, director of research and innovation at the Trust, said: "Recruiting our 100th

participant is a significant milestone for this home-grown study and it's very exciting for the teams and everyone involved.

"With cases of the virus still high in our communities, we know there are still lots of people who might be interested in joining us and we are continuing to recruit for the study.

"We want to include as many people as possible so we can achieve the most accurate results to help us determine whether the liquid reduces the severity and length of time of people's symptoms."

It's free to sign up to the study, and you will be sent the liquid or placebo and instructions on how to take it. The research team will then be in touch to ask about your symptoms.



Jessica Evans

Anyone who has tested positive for Covid-19 in the past five days could be eligible to take part. For more information contact your local research team:

QEQM Margate:

01843 234406 - ekhufft.researchteamqeqmhospital@nhs.net

KCH Canterbury:

01227 868764 - ekhufft.researchteamkch@nhs.net

WHH Ashford:

01233 616271 - [ekhufft.thewilliamharveyresearchteam@nhs.net](mailto:thewilliamharveyresearchteam@nhs.net)

Could you help your local hospital?

Your hospital needs you!



We have launched an ambitious scheme to recruit enough volunteers for every ward in our hospitals.

We're also looking for people to help greet patients and visitors at the entrances to each of its hospitals and help direct them to where they need to go.

And people are also needed to help out in the League of Friends shops.

Mandy Carliell, the Trust's head of patient and public involvement, appealed to people to consider helping out at their local hospital.

She said: "Our fantastic staff are working extremely hard looking after patients, and they really need some extra help from their local communities.

"If we can have a volunteer helping to answer the phones on the ward, or making sure supplies of PPE are kept stocked up, or chatting to patients who are lonely or confused, it frees up clinical staff to go where they are most needed.

"We had to pause volunteer recruitment at the start of the coronavirus pandemic and they were hugely missed. Now, after reviewing safety protocols, we are able to

welcome volunteers back who are making a real difference to our staff and our patients."

Roles are available at the Trust's three acute hospitals: Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital in Margate, William Harvey Hospital in Ashford and the Kent and Canterbury Hospital.

As well as ward helpers and meet and greet, there are opportunities for people to work as gardeners, and volunteers can give as much or as little time as they can spare.

Full training will be given for all the roles, all volunteers will have a personalised risk assessment to help keep them safe and will not be asked to work in any area where there are Covid-positive patients.

The roles are open to anyone who is over 18, and in the first instance people are asked to fill out an online application form at <https://www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/members/volunteering-at-east-kent-hospitals/>

Questions can be emailed to Mandy at mandy.carliell@nhs.net

Olympic mural helps physiotherapy patients reach their own finish line

Patients striving for the finish line in their rehabilitation can find a little extra inspiration thanks to a new mural.

An image of an Olympic running track has been installed in the physiotherapy gym at the Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital in Margate, helping to motivate people using treadmills to improve their mobility after surgery or injury.

It is part of a package of improvements to the department, funded by East Kent Hospitals Charity, that also includes a new children's waiting area with colourful aquarium mural, and additional equipment such as weights and exercise bikes.

Paediatric physiotherapist Agnieszka Pawlak is behind the make-over, which aims to improve the experience of all patients.

Devon Amos, clinical specialist physiotherapist, said she hoped

it would encourage patients to continue working on their recovery.

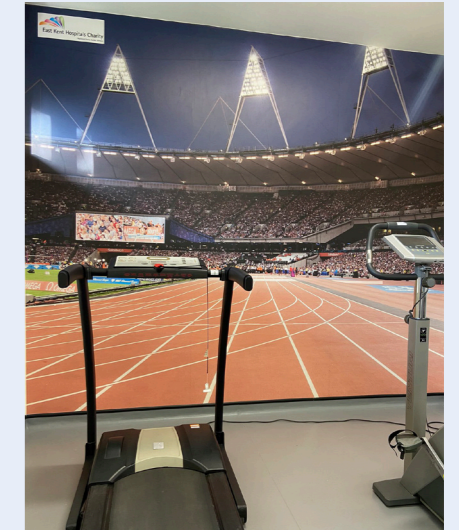
She said: "The murals look fantastic and they have helped add an additional fun and inspiring element to our rehabilitation groups.

"Rehabilitation work can feel repetitive and can take weeks or even months, so giving people something different to focus on can really help them to stay motivated. And what better than an Olympic track, with all it represents?"

Dee Neligan, senior charity officer for East Kent Hospitals Charity, said they were delighted to be able to fund the project.

She said: "It's wonderful to see the murals are up and are getting positive feedback.

"Agnieszka has been brilliant in helping to make her idea a reality and I hope it will inspire our patients to achieve their goals - it might not be an Olympic gold medal but



New Olympic mural at the QEQM gym.

sometimes being able to improve your mobility enough to enjoy a walk with the family can be just as rewarding."

For more information about East Kent Hospitals Charity and how to support their work, visit <https://www.ekhcharity.org.uk/>

Thousands to benefit from earlier diagnostic tests at east Kent hub

Thousands of people each year will be offered CT scans at a new diagnostic hub being set up at Buckland Hospital in Dover.

The hub is the first one in Kent and is [one of 40 announced](#) by the Government, aiming to provide easier and quicker access to diagnostic tests nearer people's homes.

Phase one of the project will see a mobile CT scanner based at the hospital in Coombe Valley Road, while phase two involves a permanent scanner installed inside the building. The outpatients department will also be expanded to introduce other tests, creating one-

stop shop for patients. A third phase will include expanding the endoscopy department.

Liz Shutler, East Kent Hospitals' deputy chief executive and director of strategic development, said: "Our hard-working teams have continued caring for people throughout the coronavirus pandemic, but we know there are a lot of people who are still waiting for tests or scans.

"The new diagnostic hub will make it easier for people to access the tests they need sooner, meaning they will be able to start any treatment they need.

"It also avoids the need for

people to travel to one of our acute hospitals, helping to keep services there free for emergency patients."

The project is based on a 'hub and spokes' design, where the hospital will be the hub and other 'spokes' at GP practices and other sites in the community will provide more tests such as ultrasound scans, skin biopsies, and x-rays.

The diagnostic hub will operate from 8am to 8pm seven days a week, for people who have been referred from their GP.

As well as screening for cancer, it will help patients with Long Covid and other conditions including skin, ear and eye conditions.

Thanks to more than £6million of Government funding, the hub should be fully operational by March 2022.

New surgical centre brings hope



Four new operating theatres have opened at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital, dedicated to treating people needing planned orthopaedic surgery.

People who have their operations in the new centre are cared for on two newly renovated wards, Invicta and St Lawrence, as well as providing them with a centre of excellence for orthopaedic surgery and recovery, this also frees up theatres and beds at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford and the Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital in Margate for trauma and cancer surgery.

The first patient to go under the knife in one of the brand-new theatres was mum and grandmother Maureen Andrews, 69, who had surgery to relieve pressure on nerves in her spine.

Mrs Andrews, who lives in Folkestone Road, Dover, said: "I felt really honoured to be the first ever patient in the new centre.

"I felt a bit like royalty; everyone was so lovely and welcoming and it



Maureen Andrews

was very safe and clean

"I was a bit nervous but I really wanted to get it done."

She had been suffering from pain and numbness in her legs and feet that left her relying on painkillers and unable to go out for more than half an hour at a time.

Steroid injections and other treatment had not worked, so consultant Omar Yanni, East Kent Hospitals' lead doctor for trauma and orthopaedics, decided an operation gave the best chance of being able to live a normal, active, life again.

The procedure, on Wednesday, 4 August, took several hours but Mrs Andrews was able to go home the following day, where daughter Claire moved in to care for her as she recovered.

She said: "My family are very supportive and I can always rely on all of them. Claire has been fantastic at looking after me and all the staff on the ward and in the centre were fantastic.

"Now I am hoping to be well enough to go to my granddaughter's 18th birthday party next week."

The centre will treat around 3,500 people a year and was officially opened by Trust chief



Information for patients waiting for treatment

The NHS had to postpone many operations and procedures during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, to treat high numbers of patients who were very unwell with COVID-19.

We are doing all we can to provide as many operations and procedures as possible.

If you are waiting for treatment from us, we will contact you as soon as your operation can be scheduled. You do not need to contact the hospital or your GP.

If your condition has worsened since you were referred to us for treatment, please tell your GP or contact your consultant's secretary (their name will be on the letter you received from the hospital to confirm that you are on the waiting list for treatment).

If you still have concerns, you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) by telephone on 01227 783145 or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net. The PALS service is open 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays). It provides a specific service for patients who are waiting for surgery.

Further information

More information, including what to expect when you come to your appointment, is available on our website at www.ekhuft.nhs.uk.

executive Susan Acott at a Covid-safe ceremony attended by Professor Tim Briggs CBE, national director of clinical improvement for the NHS as well as staff from across the Trust.

Julia Blackwood, general manager for trauma and orthopaedics, said the team was

looking forward to being able to help even more patients.

She said: "Everyone on the team is extremely excited that the centre is now open as they can all see the real benefits that it will bring. I'd like to thank all of the staff involved in getting us to this point."



Virtual appointments helped cut waiting times

Waiting times for patients with complex communication needs have more than halved thanks to a team's innovative use of video and hybrid consultations.



Ryan Savage

The Kent and Medway Communication and Assistive Technology Service, KM CAT, adult team, which is part of the medical physics department, is just one of the teams who have embraced technology to help them continue caring for people throughout the pandemic.

They work with people who have no or very little speech, and who often have complex physical difficulties meaning they can't use their hands to communicate. Instead they rely on alternative and augmentative communication, or AAC. Stephen Hawking and Lost Voice Guy are perhaps the most famous examples of AAC users.

At the start of the pandemic, finding a way to deliver their service remotely was a top priority for the

team. Thanks to support from the IT department they were able to put a solution in place and waiting times from referral to initial consultation reduced from 28 days in 2019/20 to 12 days, thanks to the use of video and conference calling.

Georgina Overall, highly specialist speech and language therapist with the team, said: "With the help of IT, within weeks of the first lockdown we were able to introduce remote video consultations with many of our service users. This meant we could see them and their AAC.

"We were able to adopt a hybrid approach as well, so one of the team would visit and other members would attend remotely.

"Covid-19 challenged us to think creatively about how we deliver the service, but the feedback has been mainly positive, with people finding the consultations met their needs."

Ryan Savage, who has cerebral palsy, has been a long-time user of AAC, and the team were able to use remote consultations to help him trial new equipment and carry out assessments, making his day-to-day communication easier.

Occupational therapist Julie Bradford said: "Ryan tried out different technologies to help him use his device, and he told us that having support through video calls was helpful.

"He agreed that he found the process hard work but said it was worth doing.

"The hybrid and remote consultations have also had benefits for staff, with people reducing their travel time but still being able to achieve session goals."

Staff across the Trust adjusted their ways of working to help keep people safe.

Around half of all outpatient appointments now take place virtually, and they are particularly suited to consultations discussing follow-on care or treatment plans.

Andy Barker, director of ICT at East Kent Hospitals, said staff and patients had embraced the new way of working.

He said: "Healthcare needs do not stop just because there is a pandemic, so it was vital that we quickly put in place a system that would allow our fantastic medical staff to continue providing the best care for our patients.

"Video consultations are not suitable in every situation, for example if a patient needs a physical examination, but for many people they are the best and safest option, and allow the medical team to discuss follow-on care or treatment plans without the risk of the patient attending hospital."

Clinicians use the Attend Anywhere platform, which connects people to a virtual waiting room where a receptionist checks their details, before they are put through to the clinician.

It is totally secure and free for patients to use.

For more information on video appointments within the Trust, visit <https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/information-for-patients/video-outpatient-appointments/attend-anywhere/>

Helping people on the road to recovery from Covid

Recovering from Covid doesn't stop when you leave hospital – in fact, some patients have a long road ahead of them to recover their strength and fitness, particularly if they were in critical care.

But they are supported every step of the way by a dedicated team of experts from East Kent Hospitals.

Critical care follow-up specialist nurses Lucy Mummery and Zoe Mannering, together with physiotherapist Sarah Gotke, lead weekly online support groups featuring exercise sessions as well as the chance to share experiences of recovery.

It is just one of the services offered by the team, who also visit patients on the wards before they are discharged home, and contact people individually as well to check how they are settling in.

Lucy said: "Some people think they were the only ones experiencing memory loss, or finding it hard to concentrate, and being able to talk to others in the same boat is really valuable for them.

"There are always a lot of common themes, whether it's trouble eating or sleeping, or their feelings about surviving COVID-19 when the news was full of people who are dying from it.

"Others are worried about persistent coughs, or fatigue, and we are able to do a lot of troubleshooting and reassuring."

The group also benefits from advice and input from other professionals, including consultant anaesthetists, pharmacists, and speech and language therapists, as well as outside experts, including vocal coaches who volunteered their skills to help people improve their breathing.

Kerry Boyle and Cathy Robinson draw on singing techniques to help people tackle breathlessness that is often a lasting effect of coronavirus.

Zoe said: "The sessions with Kerry and Cathy give people something different to try and techniques they can use and develop outside the group.

"We are really thankful to them for giving their time to us so generously."

Kerry, who runs Canterbury Ladies Choir, Canterbury Girls' Choir and The Canterbury Voices, and also offers singing lessons, said they were delighted to be able to help.

She said: "So many of us have felt helpless throughout the pandemic so to be able to do something that has helped people has been really rewarding.

"As singers, breathing is such a lot of what we do and sharing our techniques has been wonderful.

"It's lovely to be able to work



Vocal coaches Kerry Boyle and Cathy Robinson

with people and have some positive impact."

Stephen Robinson, who spent a month in hospital – including three weeks in intensive care – with COVID-19, said the group was a great help.

He said: "It was fantastic to be able to talk to others who have been in the same situation and to find out that they were going through the same things as you were.

"When I came out of ITU I couldn't walk, I couldn't talk or swallow, I couldn't eat or drink.

"I was still experience fatigue and hearing others say the same, and getting reassurance from the staff, was really valuable."



Lucy Mummery, left, Sarah Gotke, and Zoe Mannering

East Kent Hospitals Council of Governors

There is no better time... ...to sign up as a member of your local NHS Trusts

East Kent Hospitals is your local NHS Trust and provides hospital care.

Sign up today and enjoy these benefits

- Becoming a member of our Trust is FREE
- You get access to high street discounts normally only available to NHS staff
- It makes it easier for us to keep in touch with you
- You'll be kept up to date with improvements and changes to local NHS services
- You can get involved as much or as little as you want
- You can vote for the person who will represent you on our Council of Governors.

For more information about becoming a Trust member

[Click here to visit our website](#)
email foundationtrust@nhs.net
phone 01233 651891

As a Foundation Trust, our members elect a Council of Governors who have an important role in listening to and representing YOUR views.

Get in touch, our governors are here to represent you

You can contact our governors and find out more about them on our website by clicking [here](#).

Staff governors are members of the Trust's staff and public governors are members of their local communities. Partner governors are representatives of other parts of the public sector, for example the voluntary sector, education or local government.

Governors are elected by members of the Trust, they work closely with the non-executive Directors of the Trust and have other duties such as appointing the Chairman and non-executive Directors.

Our members also receive an invitation to our annual members' meeting. This year the annual members' meeting was held virtually on 21 September 2021. There was a short presentation from our Chief Executive Susan Acott, Lead Governor at the time Alex Lister and Director of Finance and Performance Phil Cave, plus a question and answer session. [You can read our annual report here](#).

Do you have feedback for the Governors, or suggestions for how they could improve or do things differently? Email foundationtrust@nhs.net

Council of Governors



Improving communication

We are working with local communities to make things easier for people who may need communication support when coming to the hospital.

Live video interpreting (BSL) service

At East Kent Hospitals, we use a live British Sign Language (BSL) service that allows people with hearing difficulties to communicate by video with an interpreter who then relays medical information back to staff.

Following feedback from the local Deaf community, we have adopted cards that patients can show staff, to ensure a video interpreter is arranged to help them communicate if an in-person interpreter is not available or if attending the hospital in an emergency.

These A5 cards are now available and can be requested by email to info@healthwatchkent.co.uk

Healthwatch Kent, Kent County Council, Sensory and Autism services and Deaf forums across Kent have supported the development of the cards.

Interpreters are available on demand via video link and are all qualified in BSL interpreting and DBS checked. They have medical interpreting experience and are registered with the NRCPD, the National Register of Communication Professionals working with Deaf and deafblind people.

For information on how to use the video interpreting service please visit our website at www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/video-sign-language

Accessible information

We have implemented a new Easy Read Information service for patients and carers, which provides information leaflets about different conditions or procedures.

East Kent Mencap, The Kent Association for the Blind (KAB) and sixth form students from Foreland Fields School in Ramsgate have all worked with us to help us to establish the framework of the Easy Read service and testing of information and website tools.

Each leaflet is tested with patient volunteers who have a mild to moderate learning disability, sensory loss or impairment before it is published.

Bernie Hannon is a volunteer for the project, and says: "Easy read documents ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access important health information and guidance and a greater opportunity for people to make their own choices about their health and wellbeing."

"This is an invaluable service for patients and carers who need communication support"

- Our Easy Read Leaflets can be found on our website at <https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/easy-read-patient-leaflets/>

Get the right treatment when you need it

There are things we can all do to help ourselves and the NHS this winter:

Visit your local pharmacy
Pharmacies can offer free advice and treat a variety of health issues without an appointment.

Use NHS 111
NHS 111 is open 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, offering support on a wide range of conditions. You can go online 111.nhs.uk or call.

Get your vaccine
Make sure you've had your Covid-19 vaccine or flu vaccine, if you're eligible.

Support your mental health
Find out more about the support available for you or someone you care for online: www.stopthinkchoose.co.uk

Dr Navin Kumta, Clinical Chair at NHS Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "The NHS is always busy, especially during winter and it's really important that people go to the right place for help. We are encouraging patients to use NHS 111, either online or by phone, as this will direct them to the best service for their needs."

"Knowing the right place to go can really help people get the treatment they need faster, whether that's with a local pharmacy, GP practice, an urgent treatment centre (UTC) or by taking some simple self-care steps."

"There are a number of UTCs across the county and these can treat many urgent minor injuries and illnesses without the need to visit an A&E department."

"Patients can find out if they need to visit a UTC by getting in touch with NHS 111 and, if they do, an appointment can be booked for them. NHS 111 is open 24-hours a day, seven days a week."

Find out more at www.stopthinkchoose.co.uk



JUST THINK 111 FIRST

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

