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# YOUR hospitals

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**Life-long learning:**  
Apprenticeships are not  
just for school leavers

.....



**Here for you:**  
Meet some of the  
teams providing  
emergency care

.....

**Going green:**  
How we're caring for our planet  
and our patients





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# A message from our chief executive, Tracey Fletcher



**D**uring the past few months we have seen the publication of Dr Kirkup's report following the independent investigation into our maternity and neonatal services at East Kent, produced after families bravely shared their experiences of failings in their care.

This was a profound document for the Trust, and the themes that Dr Kirkup has drawn together need to be considered by all services across our organisation. We are committed to learning the lessons from the report, and from the feedback of people who use our services. I am truly sorry for the harm and suffering that has been caused.

Over the past year we have increased the numbers of midwives and doctors, improved staff training and are listening to patients by offering every person who gives birth with us a follow-up conversation six weeks later so we can learn from their experiences. We know there is much more to do and we will not rest until we know

we are providing the safe, high-quality care our patients expect and deserve.

As I write this, we have been through a very challenging winter.

In the NHS, winter is widely known as a very busy period, as more people become ill with respiratory illnesses, and people slip and fall in icy weather.

But for many years, our hospitals – like others across the country – have been busy all year round, with increased pressures on staff who are working extraordinarily hard to provide the best possible care.

In this issue, you can meet some of the people who provide care in our emergency departments – from pharmacy technicians helping to make sure people receive their usual medication as well as anything new that is prescribed, to specialist healthcare support workers trained to work with people experiencing a mental health crisis.

You can also read about the multi-million pound expansions of our emergency departments at both the William Harvey Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital in Margate. The work is providing much-needed extra space, for staff as well as patients.

## Finley joins the pathology team for the day

**A** schoolboy was invited to become an honorary biomedical scientist for the day to help ease his fears around having a blood test.

Young Finley Puddefoot, eight, visited the pathology department at the William Harvey Hospital to see where his blood samples would end up.

He had a tour of the biochemistry and haematology departments and was able to load samples onto a centrifuge machine, as well as sending and receiving vacuum pods, loading analysers and looking at blood films using a microscope.

The youngster has also been working with the play specialists on Padua Ward at the hospital, using special toys to practise taking blood samples.

Mum Louise said: "Finley loved visiting the lab and I can't put into

words how brilliant everyone has been with him; from the team on Padua to everyone in the lab.

"They have really put him at ease and reassured me too and Finley has now agreed we can make the appointment for him to have his blood test."

Finley was able to keep his lab coat as a memento of his visit, which was arranged as part of the Harvey's Gang initiative, set up in memory of a young boy with leukaemia who wanted to know more about what happened to his blood samples. He also received a certificate and goody bag, and will return to the lab when he has his blood test, to personally deliver the sample to the team.

Phlebotomy service manager Liz Brown said: "These tours are such a brilliant way for children to understand the process and the

hidden teams behind some of their care - it is also a huge morale boost for the laboratory teams and a great reminder that every sample is a patient."

**Below: Finley practised taking blood from Raymond Rabbit.**

**Insert: Finley was able to load samples onto machines in the lab.**





## Prostate cancer surgery felt like lottery win

**A** grandfather who had potentially life-saving surgery for prostate cancer said it felt like winning the lottery.

Malcolm Cole had his prostate removed in a procedure using the surgical robot at the K&C, and is now encouraging other men to talk to their GP about a PSA blood test to check on the health of their prostate.

The 68 year old, who lives near Dover, said: "I only saw my GP thanks to my wife, who kept nagging me about it. So it's thanks to her, as well as the surgeon Sashi Kommu and the whole team, that I am still here."

"When I was told I had prostate cancer, I knew I wanted the whole

thing taken out and I started to do some research.

"When I read about robotic surgery I thought that sounded perfect, but I thought it would be hundreds of miles away.

"To discover I could have the operation in Canterbury was fantastic, and to have Mr Kommu – who trains other people in robotic procedures – as my surgeon felt like winning the lottery."

Mr Kommu, who is a consultant urological robotic surgeon with the Trust, said: "Though we don't know what exactly causes it, we know that there are three main risk factors for getting prostate cancer: increasing



Malcolm Cole

age, family history of prostate cancer and being of black ethnicity.

"Men who fall into these categories or have symptoms are encouraged to contact their GP. A PSA blood test can be done and could help diagnose prostate cancer early.

"Mr Cole was able to access a PSA test via his GP and this led to a rapid referral leading to treatment when the cancer was in a curable stage and can now enjoy a potentially normal lifespan."

## Special caps help ease children's fears about surgery

**H**aving surgery at any age can be daunting, but staff at East Kent Hospitals have devised a scheme to make the experience less scary for children and young people.

Surgical care practitioner Patricia Velazquez-Ruta and anaesthetist John Coombes came up with the idea of creating caps in special fabrics for the children to wear during their operation.

Youngsters admitted to Padua Ward at the William Harvey Hospital for surgery can choose from a range of fabrics including unicorns, Marvel Heroes, Star Wars, and Harry Potter, with their anaesthetist wearing a matching one.

The caps have been created by volunteers from the Ashford, Dover & Folkestone Scrubbers, the fabric is funded by the Friends of the William Harvey Hospital, and Made in Ashford have also lent their support by

providing meeting space for the group.

Dover mum Cassie Jenkins, whose six-year-old son Abel had his tonsils removed, said the project really helped him feel at ease.

She said: "He was really nervous beforehand but the staff were absolutely fantastic and being able to choose his own cap really helped.

"It meant he felt a bit more in control of the process and he was so proud to take his cap home and show his siblings.

"It made the experience a lot more fun and put him at ease, and Patricia was brilliant at explaining the project and chatting to him.

"We really felt cared for and I think it's an amazing project."

Patricia, who also runs a textile design company, said: "The idea is to make children and young people feel more empowered, and part of the team and the process, and to make



Abel Jenkins

their surgery feel less scary.

"Before the project, they would be the only person in theatre not wearing a cap, so giving them the option to choose one really helps them to bond with the team and makes it more fun.

"They will be able to keep the cap as a memento of their visit."

The children's surgical caps project is initially a pilot at the William Harvey Hospital and the team are collecting feedback and will write a research paper on its impact. They hope to expand it to other hospitals within the Trust if it proves to help ease children's nerves and improve their experiences.

## More families to benefit from 3 Wishes Project

A project aiming to bring comfort to people who die in critical care, and their families, has been expanded to more hospitals across east Kent.

**E**ast Kent Hospitals was the first Trust in the country to pilot the 3 Wishes Project, which launched at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford a year ago and allows staff to grant 'wishes' to patients at the end of their life.

More than 30 patients have been able to benefit from the initiative, and it has now been rolled out to the Kent and Canterbury and QEQM Hospitals, thanks to funding from East Kent Hospitals Charity.

Sarah Whitney, clinical nurse educator in the critical care unit at the QEQM, said: "Generous funding from our charity means we can create meaningful, long-lasting memories and personal keepsakes while allowing families to spend precious time together in a less clinical environment.



The team at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital at the launch of the 3 Wishes Project there

"The 3 Wishes Project will enable us to enhance the end-of-life care we deliver and to respond to family and patient wishes in a more compassionate way."

The project was founded at a hospital in Ontario, Canada, and is now used in countries across the world.

Wishes can include creating a personalised environment with photos, lighting and music, making keepsakes for families, or encouraging connections with family, friends or pets.

Dee Neligan, senior charity officer for East Kent Hospitals Charity, said: "The 3 Wishes Project has made a

real difference to the experience of dozens of families at the William Harvey Hospital and we're delighted we can now offer patients in the critical care units at the QEQM and Kent and Canterbury Hospitals the same opportunities.

"Thanks to the generous support of our communities we are able to provide a range of items to help families honour and celebrate their loved one, to make their room homelier, or to create memories and keepsakes they can treasure forever."

Find out more about the project at <https://www.ekhcharity.org.uk/critical-care/>



Some of the items available for the 3 Wishes Project at the QEQM



# We're sorry and we want to change

How we're responding to *Reading the signals*, the report of the investigation into East Kent's maternity and neonatal services.

**A**s we go to press, it has been four months since the report into our maternity and newborn services was published. This report is deeply shocking for all of us, and you will want to know what we have been doing, and will be doing, to improve services for the families that come to us for care.

## About the report

The report from the independent investigation, published in October, found that women, babies and their families had suffered significant harm because of poor care in our maternity and newborn services, between 2009 and 2020. The report

also found that clinical care was not good enough and that we did not listen to women, their families and indeed at times, our own staff. The experience those families endured was unacceptably and distressingly poor.

The report highlighted care that repeatedly lacked kindness and compassion, both while families were in our care and afterwards, when families were coping with injuries and deaths. It also found at least eight opportunities where the Trust Board and other senior managers could and should have acted to tackle these problems effectively. This was simply not good enough.

The consequences were devastating. Of the 202 cases assessed by the panel, the outcome for babies, mothers and families could have been different in 97 cases, and the outcome could have been different in 45 of the 65 baby deaths, if the right standard of care had been given.

The Trust Board has apologised unreservedly for the pain and loss endured by the families and for the failures of the Board to effectively act. These families came to us expecting that we would care for them safely and compassionately, but we failed to do that. We accept all that the report says, and we are

determined to use the lessons within it to put things right.

- You can read the report in full on the Government's website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maternity-and-neonatal-services-in-east-kent-reading-the-signals-report>

## An open letter from our Chair and Chief Executive

**O**ur Chair, Niall Dickson, and Chief Executive, Tracey Fletcher have published an open letter to apologise to those within our communities. Some of this is printed here and you can read it in full on our website at [www.ekhft.nhs.uk](http://www.ekhft.nhs.uk)



*"We are aware that saying sorry is not enough and that what is needed is meaningful action and real change. We are also clear that there is learning from the lessons in the report for every area of our organisation, these are not just confined to maternity."*

*"That is why we are embarking on a fundamental transformation of the way we work. We are starting with a commitment to openness and honesty, so that whenever something goes wrong, everyone feels able to admit to and learn from our mistakes..."*

*"We know the enormous pressures our hospitals are under, and we accept that changing how a large organisation operates will take time, but it is possible. We know too that if we are to succeed, we must learn from and involve patients and their families, and work in partnership with them to develop and deliver our response to the report."*

*"We are here to listen, to learn and to work with you and all our staff to bring about effective change."*

Niall Dickson CBE  
Chairman

Tracey Fletcher  
Chief Executive



## How to get in touch

If you would like to know more or to become involved, please do contact our Patient Voice and Involvement Team, or your Trust Governor. Their details are available on our website at [www.ekhft.nhs.uk/get-involved/](http://www.ekhft.nhs.uk/get-involved/)

If you have used our maternity or neonatology services, or any of the services we provide, and have questions or concerns about your care, please contact us via our PALS team, by phone on 01227 783145 or via email at [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

## Keeping up-to-date

You can read more about the detail of our plans to improve the way we work on our website at [www.ekhft.nhs.uk](http://www.ekhft.nhs.uk). Some of this is new, some of it will build on work that has already begun. We will continue to publish our progress as we work to make improvements to both our maternity service and across our Trust as a whole.

We now 'live-stream' the meetings of our Trust Board, so it's easier for people to join the meeting and ask questions. You can join us via the web link that we publish on our website at [www.ekhft.nhs.uk](http://www.ekhft.nhs.uk)



### Reading the signals

Maternity and neonatal services in East Kent – the Report of the Independent Investigation

October 2022

Dr Bill Kirkup CBE

HC 681



# Making sure our patients' and communities' voices are heard

Could you help improve our services, by sharing your views and experience?



Karen Edmunds, head of patient voice and involvement

**W**e have recruited a new patient voice and involvement team to help us genuinely and effectively involve our patients and our communities in our services.

Karen Edmunds, our new head of patient voice and involvement, said: "Our vision is to work towards a situation where patients and families and people from our local communities work side by side with our staff to improve services.

"Sometimes even small changes can have a big impact. Our patients and their loved ones know best when it comes to how it feels to be in hospital or to attend an out-patient appointment.

"We want the people who use our services and their families to be central to the debate when decisions

are made. Because what matters to you should matter to us.

"We can't undo someone's bad experience, but we can learn from it and do our best to stop it happening to anyone else."

There are patient involvement officers based on our three acute sites in Ashford, Canterbury and Margate, as well as a dedicated patient feedback co-ordinator who will look at all of the feedback gathered to identify themes and areas for improvement.

Karen said: "I grew up in east Kent, I live here, and my family live here, so I want our services to be not only good for my family and friends, but for everyone in the wider community when they need us.

"For a lot of people, the NHS is quite baffling and they aren't sure who they can talk to when they have ideas on how we can make improvements – we will be their way in and we will listen to them and support our services to act on what

they tell us. Where people have a concern or complaint we will direct them to PALS who are in the best position to resolve it.

"All the best-performing Trusts have really good patient and public involvement and put patients and families at the centre of what they do."

People can get involved on a voluntary basis by becoming a Participation Partner. There is a short application form to complete. People can then join a group, be involved in a project, or help out with staff interviews. We are currently looking for people to volunteer to be on the trust's thrombosis group and the end of life care committee. Both of these groups meet online.

If you have used our services, or you are a family member of someone who has, or you are active in a local voluntary organisation that supports people in our communities, we'd love you to get involved. All that's needed is a willingness to give some of your time and a desire to make a positive difference.

If you are interested contact the team at [ekhuft.patientvoice@nhs.net](mailto:ekhuft.patientvoice@nhs.net) or text 07955 320711.

*Our patients and their loved ones know best when it comes to how it feels to be in hospital or to attend an out-patient appointment.*

*Karen Edmunds*

# Carbon-free care

We're committed to caring for our environment, as well as our patients.



value to our patients and reflects the ethics of many of our staff, who care deeply about the natural world and are passionate about protecting it.

"The scale of the issue means it can feel overwhelming, but there are small things we can all do that will have a real impact, whether that's recycling our rubbish or turning off lights and electrical equipment if it is not needed."

The solar panels at QEQM mean the hospital does not draw any electricity from the National Grid during the summer months. They have also been installed at the William Harvey Hospital, saving 159 tonnes of carbon per year and we plan to install more on other sites.

LED light fittings have been installed on all our sites, saving hundreds of tonnes of carbon each year and we are also upgrading our machinery to make it more energy efficient.

The Trust is also working to reduce waste in other areas, for example by ensuring any new fleet or lease vehicles are electric or hybrid-powered.

We are also bidding for national funding to help us implement more schemes focusing on carbon reduction, with the aim of reducing our carbon emissions by 10 per cent each year, until 2025/26.

You can find out more about our environmental sustainability on our website: <https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/about-us/environmental-sustainability/>

**T**he NHS has set a target of being net zero for carbon emissions by 2040 and we are well on the way to meeting that goal. Environmental sustainability is one of the Trust's key objectives.

Some of the measures we have already implemented, with the help of our subsidiary 2gether Support Solutions, include installing solar panels at our hospitals to generate electricity, changing light bulbs for more environmentally friendly LED bulbs and improving insulation.

Chief executive Tracey Fletcher said: "We all have a responsibility to do what we can to protect our environment, as individuals and as organisations.

"At East Kent Hospitals, we

are determined to play our part to reduce the effects of climate change, and will do all we can to limit our environmental impact.

"Implementing environmentally sustainable principles and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions adds

*At East Kent Hospitals, we are determined to play our part to reduce the effects of climate change, and will do all we can to limit our environmental impact.*

*Tracey Fletcher*



# Here to help when you need us most

Hundreds of people are treated in our emergency departments every single day – and while most people expect to see doctors and nurses, there are many other people within the team providing your care.

From paramedics to pharmacy staff, they form part of a dedicated group of professionals working to get you the right treatment as quickly as possible.



Laura Glendenning

Here are a few of the team members you might meet if you're treated at the QEQM...

As a paramedic, Laura Glendenning was on the frontline of emergency care.

Now part of the team at the QEQM hospital, she brings her wealth of experience to benefit our patients.

Laura has worked her way up to become a senior sister and, together with the consultant on duty, runs the department; allocating staff, taking handovers from ambulances

and making sure the right team is there for emergencies such as cardiac arrests.

She said: "It's challenging but I love my job and we have a fantastic team here.

"Everyone is here to do their best for our patients. We do a board round every two hours, where we discuss every single patient in the department and make sure they all have a plan – even if there's 140 of them. We make sure their treatment or referrals are in progress and

check on anyone who is really sick or deteriorating."

Working in a hospital is very different to being on the road – and not just because you are inside, with no danger of being rained on or having to scramble across muddy terrain to reach your patient.

But there are also challenges, including dealing with frustrated relatives or patients.

The department has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse or violence, and police are called if staff



Claire Holman

members are assaulted. There is also a red card system, where persistent offenders risk being banned from the hospital unless they need emergency life-saving treatment.

Laura, who has a three-year-old daughter, said: "I was actually hit the other week by a patient, and police are now dealing with that.

"Sometimes we could have been dealing with a child in cardiac arrest, then have to go to the waiting room where someone shouts in your face because they have waited three hours to see a doctor.

"They don't understand that we have to deal with the sickest people first so if their injury isn't life-threatening then they will be waiting a while.

"A lot of colleagues have experienced difficulties with their mental health since Covid because of the sheer amount of what we saw and what we experienced, and quite a few have needed counselling.

"I'm lucky because I can talk to my husband, who is a paramedic, and he understands, and the team at work are also incredible and we support each other."

Mum-of-two Claire Holman wanted to be a veterinary nurse when she was a child. She tried a few different jobs but decided on healthcare after seeing the fantastic care teams at the QEQM gave her dad after he had a stroke.

Now part of the emergency department team, Claire's role focusses on keeping some of the most vulnerable patients safe.

*My role is rewarding and challenging in equal measures but I'm passionate about helping to keep people safe so it is a privilege to work with such a wide range of patients.*

Claire Holman

We are working to improve our emergency departments – you can read more about that on page 13.

Unfortunately, despite the expansion of the departments at both the William Harvey and QEQM Hospitals, there are times when they are very busy with long waits for people with less urgent conditions.

Ambulance services are also under pressure and we work closely with crews to admit patients into the department, releasing them to answer more 999 calls.

This can mean that sometimes patients may be cared for in a corridor or in an open area of the department, rather than in a cubicle, while a bed is found. This is as an alternative to leaving patients queuing in ambulances outside the department.

We are very sorry if this is your experience. Our staff throughout the hospital work hard to provide a bed as soon as possible.

Only people who have been assessed by a doctor or nurse will be allocated to a corridor. You will continue to receive care from the team while you wait for a bed in a cubicle or on a ward, and you will be regularly reviewed by senior medical staff to make sure your condition has not changed.

If you have any questions about your care, please speak to the staff looking after you or the nurse in charge.

As an enhanced observation support worker, she works primarily with people experiencing a mental health crisis, but she is also a vital part of the wider ED team.

She said: "I couldn't work anywhere else now – I absolutely love it.

"My role is rewarding and challenging in equal measures but I'm passionate about helping to keep people safe so it is a privilege to work with such a wide range of patients.

"There isn't really a typical shift but I could be doing everything from checking on oxygen supplies in the department to carrying out risk assessments for people who may be susceptible to falls."

Her current role includes supporting people with mental health needs while they are in the emergency department.

She said: "Sometimes it helps if we can reassure people, and take the time to make sure they feel safe.

"We do have some patients that we get to know really well and I genuinely care about them all and try to make a really difficult situation a bit better for them.

"We are always looking to improve and part of the refurbishment and remodelling of the department includes created more dedicated space for people with mental health needs so I'm really excited to see that become a reality."

Dedicated pharmacy staff can also be found in the ED at QEQM as part of a project to improve patient safety.

Pharmacy technicians Michelle Brown and Ben Smith check and administer patients' regular medication to avoid any missed doses, as well as administering certain intravenous antibiotics. The role also ensures discharges are turned around quicker for patients by making sure medications are available for people to go home with.

Michelle said: "When people are brought in as an emergency, they often don't have time to bring their

(continued over)





Michelle Brown and Ben Smith

usual medication with them so we can help by taking a full history and making sure everything is prescribed appropriately and safely on their drug chart.

"We can also make sure all their allergies are recorded and that any new medication is prescribed correctly, while also answering medication related queries from other members of the team.

"And we are able to help relieve some of the pressure on the nursing staff by administering medication and being an extra pair of hands in the department to help care for our patients.

"It is a really rewarding role because you are helping treat patients who are so sick and you can see that you are making a difference."

Michelle and Ben were previously working on wards in the hospital

before joining the ED team, and said they were enjoying the new challenge.

Ben said: "It is a really busy environment and we're able to make a positive difference to our patients from the front door of the hospital, by ensuring patient safety is maintained throughout, and onto their hospital stay on the wards. We see the positive difference this has to our colleagues working in ED.

"Only a few other Trusts have permanent pharmacy staff in their emergency departments so we are leading the way and lots of other Trusts are watching with interest.

"I love being able to be involved with such a diverse range of patients; we see medical, cardiac, respiratory and other conditions as well as orthopaedic and surgical, and every day is different. I can honestly say I love my job!"

*It is a really rewarding role because you are helping treat patients who are so sick and you can see that you are making a difference.*

Michelle Brown

## When should you go to the emergency department?

Emergency departments are for life-threatening emergencies, such as

- loss of consciousness
- acute confused state and fits that are not stopping
- persistent, severe chest pain
- breathing difficulties
- severe bleeding that cannot be stopped.

There are emergency departments at the QEOM and William Harvey Hospitals.

Both hospitals also have GP-led urgent treatment centres, where you should go for treatment for sprains and strains, suspected broken limbs, minor head injuries, cuts and grazes, bites and stings, minor scalds and burns, ear and throat infections, skin infections and rashes, eye problems, coughs and colds, feverish illnesses, abdominal pain, vomiting and diarrhoea, and emergency contraception.

At the Kent and Canterbury Hospital there is a 24-hour urgent treatment centre.

At Royal Victoria Hospital in Folkestone, and Buckland Hospital in Dover, there are urgent treatment centres open from 8am to 8pm.

There are also urgent treatment centres open from 8am to 8pm at hospitals in Deal, Herne Bay, and Faversham, and at Estuary View medical centre in Whitstable.

If you are unsure which is the best option for you, or if you need urgent health advice, you can contact NHS 111 by calling 111 or visiting [111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk)



# Improving our emergency departments for patients and staff

A multi-million pound project to expand and improve our emergency departments is continuing, with the first phase complete at both the William Harvey and QEOM Hospitals.

**A**t the William Harvey, there are 12 new rapid assessment bays, nine resuscitation bays, dedicated areas for patients with mental health needs, and a large new ambulance entrance.

At QEOM, the work included creating a brand-new children's emergency department, 12 new treatment bays for adults, dedicated mental health facilities, a new entrance, and new waiting area.

Upstairs, there are dedicated staff facilities, with space for clinical teaching as well as areas for staff to work, rest and change.

The second phase at the QEOM will include renovating the existing department to create more new treatment areas, including more dedicated space for patients with mental health needs. The final phase, due to start early in 2023, will expand and renovate the resuscitation area, where some of the sickest patients are treated.

At the William Harvey, work is

now underway to transform the children's emergency department, Urgent Treatment Centre and majors area, including isolation rooms and dedicated areas for patients with dementia.

Carly Sheehan, director of nursing for urgent and emergency care, said: "These major expansions give our patients, visitors and staff a bigger, better and safer environment.

"It is excellent news for everyone who uses the departments as well as the teams who work there and who have worked hard to design a much bigger and better space to treat some of our sickest patients.

"I'd like to thank everyone for their support and patience during the work which, when complete, will help us in achieving our ambition of providing the best possible care in the best possible environment."

The expansion work has been made possible thanks to £30m national NHS investment.



Top: Some of the William Harvey ED team in their new department.  
Middle: One of the new resuscitation bays.  
Bottom: Part of the waiting area.



# Apprenticeships offer the best of both worlds

When you think of apprentices, you may picture 16 or 17 year olds, training to become plumbers or electricians.

**B**ut apprenticeships are open to people of any age, and can lead to a wide range of careers within the NHS.

East Kent Hospitals' apprenticeship advisor Cayleigh Sayle is practising what she preaches by studying for her own qualification, a Level 3 team leader apprenticeship.

She said: "There was always a reason why it wasn't the right time for me to follow that path.

"But then I became a new line manager and it seemed like the perfect opportunity.

"I was excited to get back to learning, and it's definitely given me more insight into the challenges of working and studying at the same time, particularly if you have a family."

Cayleigh's course, which she passed with distinction, involved time at college, in-person assessments, and assignments and presentations on a range of topics.

Other courses involve more work-based learning and placements, and apprenticeships are available for clinical roles as well as supporting teams.

Cayleigh said: "One of the most rewarding parts of my role is seeing our really great healthcare support workers become really great nurses thanks to apprenticeships.

"They have often been with us for years and we can give something back to them by offering them this opportunity to gain a degree-level qualification fully funded by the Trust.

"The pandemic opened people's eyes to the work of the NHS and I think it's made people consider their own roles, and perhaps see if there's a role for them in healthcare."

Amanda Chapman worked as a therapy assistant in the neuro-rehabilitation unit at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital for 10 years and was happy in her role – until Covid hit.

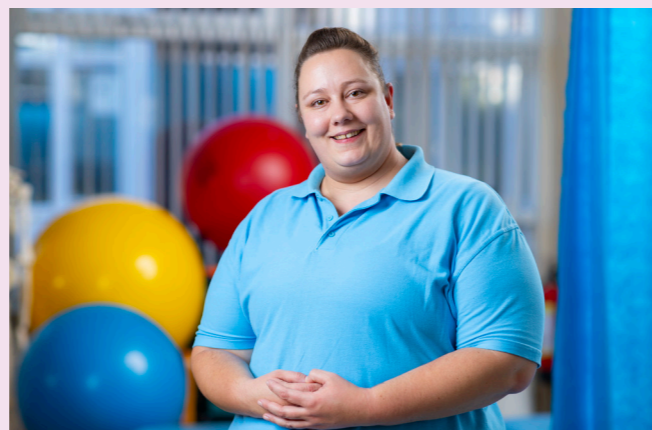
Then she was redeployed to other wards and the experience showed her she had transferable skills.

But it took other people to help her realise her potential.

She said: "I had the same email about apprenticeships forwarded to me five or six times by different people



Cayleigh Sayle



Amanda Chapman

who all said I should go for it, and when I spoke to the apprenticeships team they were really helpful and allayed all my fears.

"I'd assumed I would have to have a drop in pay but they reassured me this wasn't the case and I could continue on the same salary while I was learning.

"It's an amazing opportunity to study at university without incurring any debt, and while still earning my usual pay."

Amanda is now studying for a physiotherapy apprenticeship, with a day at university in London once a week and clinical placements too.

She said: "It gives me the opportunity to progress in my career without leaving the department I love.

"The Trust provided me with all the extra equipment I needed, from a laptop to use for the course to a stethoscope, and I am so grateful for their support.

"I would recommend apprenticeships to anyone; they give you the best of both worlds of work and studying.

## East Kent Hospitals Council of Governors

# "I'm not superman – but I'll give it my best shot!"

**E**ight years ago, Paul Schofield suffered a massive stroke and was told he would never walk, talk or drive again.

Today, not only is he doing all three, but he's also giving back to his local community as one of our Governors.

Governors are elected by members of the Trust and work closely with the non-executive Directors, as well as listening to and representing the views of the public.

For Paul, who spent 25 years as a paramedic in London, it's an opportunity to make a difference for staff and patients.

The 57 year old, who lives in Broadstairs, said: "Being a Governor has really opened my eyes. We are volunteers; we don't get paid and we aren't under contract, which gives us a lot of freedom to really find out what people think of the Trust and to follow it up and try and improve things.

"It's a privilege to be able to help people. During the worst of the pandemic we were quite restricted but now we are able to do site visits again and talk to staff face to face, and people tell us all sorts of things.

"I have taken some issues to the chief executive and I've been really impressed with her determination to get them sorted, and quickly."

Because of Paul's background, he has a particular interest in our emergency departments and in finding ways to reduce waiting times and improve care.

He said: "We know there are improvements to be made, but there is no simple fix.

"I'm not Superman, I don't have any magical powers, but I can give it my best shot. All I want to do is help people – staff and the public – as much as I can.

"I listen to everyone's views, and as Governors we have a voice and we do use it."

As well as his paramedic experience, Paul has a unique perspective as a patient too, after spending months working with NHS therapists after his stroke.

He said: "It was like being a kid again, I had to be taught how to walk up and down stairs, and how to get on a bus.

"My family were really supportive, but I did lose some friends as they just didn't know how to deal with it.

"Some people look at you as if you are stupid. At one point I wouldn't go out, but I was told I could be a couch potato and watch daytime TV, or I could go to the gym and work on my recovery.

"I can't stand daytime TV so I went to the gym. Now I've got about 95 per cent of my fitness back.

"It did open my eyes – I'd dealt with stroke patients before as a paramedic but I'd never seen them beyond the emergency department or realised how hard they had to work on rehab.

"It has been tough but I'm a determined person and I like to prove people wrong."

Paul is also involved in our Staff Disability Network, as well as our well-being team, helping support teams after traumatic events.

He said: "I try to do as much as I can to support people. I have met



so many fantastic staff who are dedicated to our patients and if I can help in a small way then I'm glad to do that."

You can find out more about our Governors and how to get involved at <https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/members/council-of-governors/>

People can also join the Trust as members. It's totally free and members are able to elect Governors, and help improve Trust services. For more information see our website or email [foundationtrust@nhs.net](mailto:foundationtrust@nhs.net)



# It's your call. Make the right choice



## Self Care

- Colds
- Sore throats
- Hangovers

Keep a stock of over-the-counter medication to help with minor illnesses



## Pharmacy

- Headaches
- Tummy aches
- Coughs

Ask your local pharmacist for advice on common minor illnesses.



## GP Surgery

- Feeling ill
- Back pains
- Ear aches

Make an appointment with your GP if you're feeling unwell and it is not an emergency.



## Urgent Treatment Centres

- Minor cuts
- Sprains
- Rashes

Get help at an urgent treatment centre if you have a minor illness or injury and can't wait to see your GP.



## A&E or 999

- Choking
- Chest pains
- Breath problems

Visit A&E or call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk.



## NHS 111

- Unwell?
- Unsure?
- Need help/

Call NHS 111 if you urgently need medical advice or you're not sure which NHS service you need.