

# COUNTLESS MATTERS

Spring 2024



## Patients and families at the heart of our new approach

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# WELCOME

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# PATIENTS AND FAMILIES AT THE HEART OF OUR NEW APPROACH

**The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has given a new rating to the Trust of ‘requires improvement’ following two inspections in October and November 2023, but have also highlighted areas where real progress is being made in improving care.**

The inspection team focused on five services – Urgent & Emergency Care, Services for Children and Young People, Medical Wards, Maternity and Medical Care at Ellesmere Port Hospital – highlighting that ‘caring’ was consistently rated as good across all five areas.

They also recognised the significant improvements in maternity care. Neonatal unit staff in particular were praised for being ‘committed to providing excellent care under difficult circumstances’. The inspection team also reported that staff in most services, and leaders at all levels, had stated that the Trust was a better place to work than it was a year ago.

The CQC described a range of challenges in Urgent & Emergency Care, Services for

Children & Young People and Medical Care – all of which the Trust is working hard to improve.

Jane Tomkinson OBE, Chief Executive Officer, said: “We are extremely proud that despite the obvious and significant challenges we face, caring has been rated as good in every service the CQC inspected – this is undoubtedly down to the hard work and dedication of our staff and speaks volumes about the fantastic people that work at our Trust. We have a way to go but we know where the challenges are and what we need to do to improve further.”

Sue Pemberton, Director of Nursing & Quality and Deputy Chief Executive Officer, added: “Treating our patients with compassion and kindness is a core value for our staff and it is testament to them that this was recognised by the CQC throughout their inspection. I would also like to pay tribute to the patients and families who are helping us reshape the way we deliver care at the Trust by working with us and actively giving us their feedback.”

CareQuality Commission

**Overall rating:**  
Requires Improvement

**Caring at our hospital is rated as good across all our services**

Staff involve and treat you with compassion, kindness, dignity and respect.



# SPOTLIGHT ON... THE PLASTIC SURGERY DEPARTMENT

**Consultant plastic surgeon Rishi Sharma explains the important work his team does, as the busiest surgical service at the Trust:**

## **What are the main aspects of your job?**

The plastic surgery department operates around 300 procedures a month.

The majority of the 250 monthly elective operations are skin cancer cases, whilst the remainder cover hand surgery, breast surgery including reconstruction, and general plastic surgery cases including lumps and bumps. Our department also carries out over 50 emergency operations a month. Finger injuries account for a large proportion of emergency visits to hospital, so we're very busy!

We are trained to reconstruct wounds and are often contacted by medical colleagues to review skin infections and wounds like pressure sores and pretibial lacerations.

## **What is a typical day like for the team?**

Busy! We start by reviewing overnight patient admissions and updates on inpatients then the on-call team carry out the ward round and either discharge patients if they have healed or plan further treatment if needed.

Then emergency operations are carried out. There are usually multiple elective operating lists which require seeing patients, confirming consent and answering questions patients may have before surgery. We also have clinics seeing new patients as well as reviewing post-op patients or cancer patients under surveillance.

## **What is a memorable patient success story that highlights the impact of your work?**

Recently, we had an elderly patient with a life-threatening skin infection in her lower leg. We joined orthopaedic colleagues and took her to theatre urgently. In cases like these urgent amputation is an option to save life over limb, but this lady walked into hospital. Whilst saving her life was clearly the priority, I was mindful that preserving her limb was also very important if possible.

Using my plastic surgery training in wound healing and reconstructions – and the latest



**Pictured: Dr Rishi Sharma with representatives from the Plastics Team. From left to right: Bismark Adjei, Plastic Surgery Registrar; Kevin Smith, Directorate Manager; Jane Ryrle, Service Manager; Rishi Sharma, Consultant Plastic Surgeon and Clinical Lead; Angela Hurst, Senior Clinical Nurse Specialist; Ahmed Khurshed, Plastic Surgery SHO; and Sharon Corbett, Secretary.**

development of skin temporising technology – we were able to not only save her life and cure the infection but we also managed to salvage her leg. This was not only a success story in terms of patient outcome but also an example of phenomenal teamwork between plastic surgery, orthopaedic, anaesthetist and intensive care doctors from surgery to recovery. Recently, the patient walked into clinic for a check-up and is so grateful for the care she received. Special mention should go to our excellent plastic surgery nurse specialist Angela Hurst whose care for this patient was incredible.

## **What advancements in plastic surgery techniques or technologies have you found most exciting or beneficial for patients?**

Science and technology drive medical advancements and this is particularly true for plastic surgery. We use a new skin temporising dressing which – as well as adding to our reconstructive “toolbox” – helps heal large and deep wounds, particularly in patients who are not always suitable for larger, complex reconstructions. The Trust have helpfully secured

funding for a replacement microscope which is the gold standard in reconstructing nerve and arterial injuries, enabling us to provide larger reconstructions to our patients that may need it.

## **What are the best parts of your job?**

We work to the ethos of treating every patient as if they are a family member and to ensure they're always at the heart of our decision making and looked after holistically. We celebrate the success stories but also learn from challenges along the way, which ultimately helps our patient care.

I take great pride in leading a team and making every member of the department not only feel valued but respected, as our patient success stories are for all to share. We all work together, supporting each other with the same goal of striving to deliver excellent patient care.



# STRIVING FOR THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF CARE

## Quality accolade for endoscopy team

**Our endoscopy department has received full JAG (Joint Advisory Group on GI Endoscopy) accreditation for another consecutive year, following a review that explored all aspects of the service.**

Developed for endoscopy service providers across the NHS and independent sector, JAG accreditation provides independent and impartial recognition of high-quality service and is regarded as one of the most innovative schemes in the healthcare sector.

The service is reviewed continuously to see where further improvements can be made to its quality of care and effectiveness through submitted evidence and regular assessment visits, assuring patients they are receiving high quality care.

Mark Jerrum, Unit Manager said: "Within the world of endoscopy, to have JAG accreditation is the 'Gold Standard', and a recognition that you are amongst the best of the best.

"The team are incredibly proud to receive this – it's a huge team effort."



## 'Outstanding' dementia service

**A new frailty memory service to improve access to diagnosis and support for elderly dementia patients has been hailed as 'outstanding' by the Neurology Academy.**

Community Consultant Geriatrician Dr Michelle McCarthy and Specialist Occupational Therapist Clare O'Donnell developed the service after discovering that many patients had undiagnosed dementia.

Recognising that frailer patients often went undiagnosed due to complex health needs, causing them to struggle to access memory services, Michelle and Clare created the new service which includes support with assessments and signposting to post-diagnostic information.

After seeing 70 patients to date, Michelle and Clare have ascertained that there is a higher rate of dementia amongst frailer patients and hope to continue providing this service.

This project, along with 16 others, was developed as part of the 7th Dementia Masterclass – a UK wide course run by the Neurology Academy.

Head of Faculty at the Neurology Academy, Prof Iracema Leroi, said: 'We were incredibly impressed by the range of work to come out of the course, from assessing cognition to screening for delirium, developing pathways to improving post-diagnostic support.'

## National NHS Staff Survey shows improvements

**Overall staff satisfaction rates at the Trust have improved, according to the results of the 2023 national NHS Staff Survey, which were published in March. 42% of staff took part, which is the highest response rate in several years.**

NHS Trusts are measured against nine key indicators with the Trust improving in eight of them and significantly so in four indicators: we are recognised and rewarded; we are safe and healthy; we are always learning and; morale.

A series of meetings to brief staff about the results were held and an action plan is now being developed to take forward the important improvement work based on the direct feedback of staff.

Jane Tomkinson OBE, Chief Executive Officer, said: "I am grateful to staff for sharing their feelings, thoughts and ideas about their experience of working here. I am determined that we will make this an excellent and outstanding place to work and I look forward to bringing about that change together."

The results of the 2023 national NHS Staff Survey are available online: [www.nhsstaffsurveys.com](http://www.nhsstaffsurveys.com)



# HUGE EFFORT TO IMPROVE PATIENT SAFETY LEADS TO FEWER FALLS AND RELATED INJURIES IN OUR HOSPITALS

**The Trust has made a long-term commitment to enhancing patient safety, with a particular focus in the last year on reducing patient falls and pressure ulcers and improving medicine safety. This collective effort is already showing great results and has reduced harm and injury caused by falls by 40%.**

Most recently, a significant investment has been made in technology designed to prevent and minimise the risks associated with patient falls.

£240,000 has been allocated for the purchase and maintenance of Ramblegard assistive technology equipment – a state-of-the-art solution that detects patient movement.

The wireless and cordless system uses sensors to detect when a patient moves from their bed, chair or toilet, meaning nurses can respond more quickly to provide support.

Following a successful trial on the Bluebell Ward at Ellesmere Port Hospital and selected wards at the Countess of Chester Hospital, the Trust has expanded the initiative across all adult wards, in A&E and the Same Day Emergency Care Centre.

Installation across the Trust is now under way and patients identified as at potential

risk of falls can expect to see this equipment in use.

On admission, if a patient is identified as being at risk of a fall, the nursing team will have a personalised care discussion with the patient and their loved ones so additional measures such as the use of assistive technology can be put in place quickly to reduce the chance of a fall.

Sue Pemberton, Director of Nursing and Quality and Deputy Chief Executive Officer, said: "Our commitment to patient safety is the driving factor in this investment.

"This equipment gives crucial seconds for a quicker response, allowing our nurses to reach and provide support to our patients. It gives you ears where you haven't got eyes. Importantly, this equipment is patient-friendly and does not impact on a patient's privacy or dignity.

"Reducing falls is a key element of our steadfast efforts to ensure we keep our patients safe when they are in our hospitals. Assistive technology equipment has already proven extremely effective in preventing falls, and it is benefiting our patients already."



## Communications with patients are going digital

**We are changing the way that we engage with patients about their care.**

Outpatient appointment letters, text message reminders and much more will soon be shared online without the need for printed letters, helping towards a greener NHS and making it easier for patients to reply and correspond with us about their appointments. Communications from the Trust can be accessed anytime, from anywhere, through the NHS app or online (via a link shared in a text message or our website).

The change to digital will happen from spring and will be rolled out gradually, so some patients will continue receive letters in the post from us for the time being.

We appreciate that some people will need time to get used to the transition to digital and that's why we have put in a safety net to ensure communications aren't missed. When the switchover happens, we will allow 72 hours for communications to be opened on the NHS app or online and if this doesn't happen we will print and post a letter. Patients who need printed letters regardless can let us know and we will arrange for this to continue.

Visit our website to find out more about how it will work, which will be update soon.





# PATIENTS TELL US ABOUT THEIR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES OF MATERNITY CARE

**Mums who gave birth at the Trust last year have praised staff for 'being there for them if help was needed during labour and birth' in the latest results of the annual NHS National Maternity Survey.**

The survey showed overall that patients at the Countess of Chester Hospital were positive about their maternity care – ranking the hospital 26th of the 61 NHS Trusts who used the same survey provider – with improvements in several areas compared to the year before.

The survey captured the perspectives of women who gave birth in February 2023 during each stage of their journey, with 20% of respondents from under-represented groups – a diverse input that has been welcomed.



The results show an improvement in a number of areas, reflecting the dedication the maternity staff show in supporting people through their pregnancy, birth and postnatal journey.

Patient experiences were about the same as most other Trusts overall, however were better than most in the following areas:

- Taking seriously any concerns being raised during antenatal care
- Staff who treated and examined patients introduced themselves
- If attention was needed during labour and birth a member of staff was there to help
- Patients received the information and explanations they needed after the birth.

Areas for further improvement have been identified to transform many aspects of maternity care and work is already underway, with the survey indicating that patients are feeling the benefits already.

Sue Pemberton, Director of Nursing and Quality and Deputy Chief Executive Officer, said: "These results are an invaluable tool to

help identify improvements to better meet the needs of women and families.

"Whilst our patients are clearly saying that services have improved, we are committed to doing even better to drive these changes forward. A robust action plan is being developed which will be aligned with plans already underway and we will be collaborating with relevant stakeholders – especially the Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership – to ensure that service improvements are based on feedback from our patients and their families."

In Summer 2025 the new Women and Children's Building will open, providing a much-improved environment for care and better facilities, which will ensure the highest quality of care for our population.



## Engagement app embraced by perinatal staff to foster new innovations in care

**Around 70 staff in the perinatal team have so far signed up to a new app being used to allow them to feedback on their day and make suggestions for improvements, big or small, which are then discussed in monthly meetings.**

New ideas are already starting to guide improvements in services, such as

the trial of a new surgical dressing to reduce infections.

Pippa Scott Heale, Divisional Director for Women and Children's Services, said: "Ideas from staff are at the heart of our commitment to improving and developing services, and we have pledged to communicate management updates

with our teams in five ways to ensure that they are updated no matter when or where they work. This new app allows us to widen how we communicate and for staff to give their feedback, which is proving to be a great success so far and as a result has been rolled out wider to include the paediatrics team."

# SKYLINE AT COUNTRESS OF CHESTER HOSPITAL TRANSFORMED BY CONSTRUCTION OF NEW WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S BUILDING

**Work continues at pace to construct the new £110 million three-storey Women and Children's Building at the Countess of Chester Hospital, which remains on track to open in summer 2025. This major new build will enhance treatment facilities and improve the quality of services and patient experience. We also look forward to providing an attractive place for our staff to work.**

The ambitious project is being clinically led with engagement with staff from across the whole of the services. The project team are being supported by Integrated Health Projects (IHP) – a joint venture between building companies VINCI Building and Sir Robert McAlpine.

The foundations have been poured and the building frame is now up, marking the end of the initial phase and visually transforming the skyline of the site.

The bricks for the exterior will start to be wrapped around the frame during the longer days and early mornings of spring. The internal works of the building are then set to get underway from September.



Together with IHP we are giving back to the local community this year, as part of our shared social inclusion commitment. IHP led activity already planned includes a sponsored duck at the popular Chester

Duck Race [Find out more about the event on Page 11], a bike ride for local charities and giving talks at local schools to inspire the next generation of construction and NHS workers.

## New members of the Board appointed

**This year has seen some important changes to the senior leadership team, with a number of appointments made to key roles and all have now started in post.**



**Chief Executive Officer**  
Jane Tomkinson  
OBE



**Director of Nursing and Quality, and Deputy Chief Executive Officer**  
Sue Pemberton



**Chief Financial Officer**  
Karen Edge



**Director of Strategy and Partnerships**  
Jonathan Develing



**Sarah Corcoran, Non-Executive Director and Maternity Champion**



**Professor Andrew Hassell, Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Quality and Safety Committee**



**Wendy Williams, Non-Executive Director and Chair of the People and Organisation Development Committee**



# IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCES OF OUR PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

## A new Patient and Family Experience Strategy is at the forefront of a new approach to improve patient care.

Developed using feedback from patients, the new strategy sets out a new vision for how care will be provided.

A better patient and family experience leads to improved patient safety and higher satisfaction for patients. Improving health outcomes can also be associated with patients having to spend less time in hospital and can reduce the likelihood of a patient being readmitted to hospital.

Sue Pemberton, Director of Nursing and Quality & Deputy Chief Executive, explains: "We have listened to our patients and they have told us that they want to be looked



after, they want to feel safe, they want compassionate care and they want to experience good hygiene and have their nutritional needs met.

"Our new strategy sets out six clear steps to help us improve standards, provide better care and above everything else, make sure our patients have the best experience possible in our hospitals."

The Trust is committed to improving the experiences that patients, families, carers and loved ones have in its hospitals and has pledged to work in partnership with patients and their families to explore every opportunity to improve the quality of care it provides.

Samantha Lacey, Associate Director of Nursing, added: "Seeing patients' experiences through their eyes is essential. We will continue to listen to and learn from

feedback so that we can better understand how we can improve the experiences of our patients and their loved ones. We want our patients to feel supported from the moment they receive a letter, phone call or come through our doors to the moment they are discharged."

You can read the Trust's strategy and see its three six-step patient and family visions – including bespoke visions for Maternity Services and the Emergency Department – on the Trust's website: [www.coch.nhs.uk](http://www.coch.nhs.uk) or use the QR code.



## Your experience at our hospital

Our patient experience vision is our commitment to you and your family.

**COMMUNITY**

We understand our population and deliver care services around the needs of our community.

"The Countess is my preferred hospital, everyone is kind and friendly and I received great care."

**ARRIVAL**

Our patients feel we are welcoming and are confident that we can tailor their care to them.

"I felt welcomed at the Trust, staff were expecting me."

**COMMUNICATION**

We fully involve patients and their families in their care and coordinate care pathways with accurate information exchange.

"Me and my family knew what was happening throughout my care."

**CARE**

We treat people with empathy, dignity and respect.

"Staff were kind, gentle and respectful to me."

**TREATMENT**

Our staff are well trained and have the skills to deliver exceptional care and treatment.

"I felt safe, and confident that staff knew what they were doing."

**GOING HOME AND AFTERCARE**

We plan for discharge and provide ongoing support.

"I felt I had the right support to get on with my life."

The new vision for patient and family experience is set out in six clear steps with bespoke visions also developed for Maternity Services and the Emergency Department to reflect the different ways patients accessing these services receive care.



# A LOOK BACK: ONE YEAR SINCE WE REFOCUSED ON WELLBEING AND INCLUSION

**Over the last twelve months huge efforts have been made to refocus our efforts on giving voice to our staff, and supporting their wellbeing.**

The results are already starting to show: the reintroduction of seven staff networks has enabled members – and the many hundreds more staff who have engaged at stands and events throughout the year – to access new avenues to share their ideas, learn about the support available and inspire others in the workplace.

Engagements with staff have ranged from information stands, such as the recent Hidden Lives tabletop exhibition (in partnership with Body Positive Cheshire and Wales) or interactive ways to gather ideas. This included an ideas board on menopause for World Menopause Day and surveys such as the recent LGBTQ+ staff survey.



Surendra Shroff, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, said: “Networks allow staff to feel safe, heard and empowered to drive change in the workplace, and it’s fantastic that the The Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME), Carers, Disability, Faith and Belief, LGBTQ+, Neurodiversity and Women’s networks have all relaunched in the last year to enable us to do just this.”

An extensive Trust-wide Culture and Civility roadshow has also allowed around 450 staff to say how they expect to be treated at work and this will be developed into a new civility charter to underpin our values and behaviours going forward.



## Celebrating our apprentices

**We recently held an event during National Apprenticeship Week to mark the exciting new pay scale which has been introduced for apprentices, and to show our appreciation of the benefit and opportunities that they bring to our Trust.**

Apprenticeships provide an opportunity for new people to join the NHS, and in doing so they give an opportunity for those in roles around them – or for existing staff who decide to become apprentices – to progress and develop in their roles too. They are a huge asset to our workforce and their contributions are much appreciated.

Louis Sands, Customer Service Apprentice, said: “I am really enjoying my apprenticeship. It’s exactly what I was looking for – supportive, practical and fun! There is a lot of opportunity to progress in my role.”

Apprentices can be anyone at any stage in their career and combine practical training in a job with study. They exist across many professions, and we currently offer over 30 different apprenticeships in a wide range of specialities from level 2 to level 7. Apprenticeships also offer flexibility and the opportunity to upskill in real-time in line with new technologies, data and the needs of our hospitals.

## Going greener: making our Countess site greener and more sustainable

**Our drive to become ‘greener’ and more sustainable has continued with the recent unveiling of a new green café and a special tree-planting ceremony at the Countess of Chester Hospital.**

To celebrate the NHS’s 75th birthday, volunteers planted 90 trees and 400 shrubs awarded by the Forestry Commission. Made from a mix of carbon absorbing hedge species including Hazel, Dogwood, Dog Rose and Hawthorn, they will make the Countess of Chester Hospital site greener for patients and staff.

Meanwhile, the Going Greener café, located inside the Women and Children’s



Building, offers staff and patients a variety of healthy food options, including a plant-based deli bar, salad options, fresh fruit and healthy snacks.

Open Monday to Friday from 9am until 2pm, the café is already proving to be a valuable addition to the Countess of Chester Hospital.

Jill Morgan, Sustainable Travel and Transport Manager, said: “Feedback from patients and colleagues has been positive for the café, who are glad to have a variety of choice for their food options.”

# FEEDBACK FROM OUR PATIENTS

“

“This is just a very simple note to say a big thank you, which will never be good enough to compensate for what you all and the NHS have done for me. I could not have been in safer hands.”

”

“

“Our daughter recently spent time in the ICU, where she was very poorly. We can't thank all the doctors and staff enough for the care our daughter was given also our thanks for the way they supported and cared for us.”

”

“

“The nurses in ICU and on ward 53 were brilliant with me – the doctors were very good as well – I can't find a fault with either. Even the tea lady and cleaning staff were absolutely brilliant. I can't thank them enough.”

”



## New Tobacco Dependency Treatment Service launched

The new Tobacco Dependency Treatment Service, which launched in November, is already proving successful in helping a number of people stop smoking.

To mark 40 years of No Smoking Day, Rachel Wright (who jointly leads the new service) and several of our staff were out and about raising awareness of this new service, chatting and giving helpful advice on how to quit smoking to dozens of staff and patients including expectant parents.

The team can help anyone who smokes tobacco to get the right support and assistance to quit and ensure that inpatients' withdrawal symptoms are managed and controlled effectively and that nicotine products are arranged from a community service after they leave hospital. Anyone who uses the service can get help to make a plan to quit and receive continued support through their journey up until they are 12 weeks smoke free.

Rachel explains: “We understand that overcoming an addiction to tobacco can be difficult but believe that our service will be able to benefit many people, and we are excited to help create positive change in this way.”

## New M&S store for the Countess of Chester Hospital

A brand-new Marks and Spencer food store will open in the main entrance of the Countess of Chester Hospital later this year.

The new store will offer a range of M&S products, including a deli selection, hot and cold drinks, fruit and vegetables, and other to-go options.

Work begins this spring, with opening scheduled for later in the summer.

Simon Holden, the Trust's Director of Finance, said: “We are extremely excited to be adding to the food and drink options at the hospital, which will give patients, visitors and staff even more choice.”



## Milk Bank extends support to families who donate

Bereaved families who have donated milk in memory of their baby with the Milk Bank at Chester are now being offered bespoke physical and emotional support after loss online through FLY Mama, as part of a new pilot aimed at widening the level of support available to donor families who give during their most difficult hour. For more information about the service and new support available email [milkbank.chester@nhs.net](mailto:milkbank.chester@nhs.net).





# FUNDRAISING NEWS



'Write your forever thank you to The Countess Charity' gifts in Wills campaign launched

**Gifts in Wills, sometimes known as legacies, have supported hospital care since before the creation of the NHS. They are an important way of raising funds for healthcare services and help us to continue to support our staff, provide specialist equipment for Ellesmere Port Hospital and the Countess of Chester Hospital whilst also addressing local health inequalities. Every single gift is incredibly precious to us.**

Last autumn, NHS Charities Together launched the 'forever thank you' campaign to promote gifts left in Wills to NHS charities. We are proud to be part of this important campaign and have launched our own bespoke version for our Trust, with posters on display around the hospitals and a new free e-pamphlet created called 'Your guide to writing your Will', which is available on request and explains how to make or change your Will and the kind of things to consider when writing it. Look out too for our upcoming free Will writing service for patients in partnership with Octopus Legacy.

To register your interest in the free Will writing scheme, or to request the new e-pamphlet, email [ngozi.ikoku@nhs.net](mailto:ngozi.ikoku@nhs.net) or call 01244 366240.



## octopus legacy



Ngozi Ikoku, Trust and Legacy Fundraiser, said: "Gifts in Wills left to our hospital are the result of the perfect marriage between care well given by our staff and care gratefully received by our patients. I would like to say a big thank you to our caring staff and generous and grateful patients that make this magic happen."

Jane Tomkinson OBE, Chief Executive Officer at the Trust, added: "We would be grateful to you for considering this way of supporting The Countess Charity. We understand it's a big decision but would like to assure you that a gift left in a Will to our charity will help provide the best care and facilities for our patients now and for generations to come."

Current projects being funded by gifts in Wills left to The Countess Charity include the:

- Purchase of a new GE HealthCare scanner for the benefit of our young patients undergoing cardiac investigations in the paediatric clinic and on the neonatal unit
- Creation of the staff Wellbeing Hub, opening in Spring.

After you have provided for your loved ones in your Will please consider supporting your local hospital with a gift that will have a lasting impact. Anyone making a Will can leave a gift – every gift, however large or small, helps to make a big difference.



## Chester Duck Race returns for tenth year

The annual Chester Duck Race returned in April to celebrate 10 years of the much-loved event. Led by main sponsor Hickory's Smokehouse, dozens of local businesses sponsored ducks – including one by our very own executive team – and the race drew in huge crowds who enjoyed enthusiastic commentary from DJ Ian Gibbons and Gavin Matthews from Chester's Dee Radio. The day included family activities like a colouring competition and Hook-a-Duck, with much fun had by all.

Taking place at The Groves on Chester's River Dee, the race raised vital money for the Retinal Eye Scanner appeal. The appeal aims to raise enough funds to buy a state-of-the-art retinal imaging machine for the Trust's Westminster Eye Clinic, which will aid the speed of eye tests, help the earlier identification and treatment of specific eye conditions and improve clinic flow.

Nicola Stubbs, Corporate and Events Fundraiser, said: "We have been over the moon to bring back our much-loved Duck Race this year, with the return of the Duck Race Raffle. The event has been yet another success and has so far raised more than £25,000 for the Retinal Eye Scanner appeal, with more monies yet to be counted."

# AN UPDATE FROM OUR GOVERNORS

As governors, we have had a busy few months and I am delighted to welcome 100 new members to the Trust following two recruitment events. We held two events to encourage more people to join our Trust, in November 2023 and March 2024, with our governors getting out and about to speak to patients and visitors to our hospitals. They were supported by a group of students from the University of Chester and it was great to see them getting involved.

## Acting on your feedback

During our recruitment event in November 2023, our governors spoke to a number of patients and visitors to the hospital who gave some invaluable feedback. This included comments about facilities in hospital buildings and how the Trust communicates with patients. We are proud to work with the Trust on future plans, developments and how patient feedback is taken forward.

Governors were also given feedback about how the Trust communicates with patients and how they are told about who they will see during their appointment. Lucy Liang, one of our governors who took part in the recruitment event said: "Lots of people we met expressed their appreciation for NHS staff which was really positive. We received a mixture of feedback about hospital services – some positive and some really constructive.

We also received positive feedback including a comment about the facilities in the Spiritual Care Centre. It was good to know that patients felt they could share their honest feedback with us. We pass on all the feedback we receive so that the Trust can discuss how it will be taken forward so that patients can see the difference their input makes.



## Save paper: get your Countess Matters via email

If you are a member, please make sure we can contact you by email so we can keep in touch with you. Emails mean we can be more sustainable by using less paper and saving us postage costs. If we do not already have your email please email our Membership Team on [membershipenquiriescoch@nhs.net](mailto:membershipenquiriescoch@nhs.net).



## Join us: become a member today!

Members can help to make a real tangible difference to the Trust and its services so that the experiences of patients, their loved ones and staff are improved. Anyone can join as a member to play a more active role in their local hospital so if you, or someone you know would be interested in supporting their local hospital, use the QR code below and join today. Help us to improve services by joining today and give as much or as little time as you can manage.

- opportunities to visit services and meet patients
- invitations to take part in discussions or surveys about services
- a vote in the annual governor elections
- a personal invitation to the Annual Members' Meeting

Members can expect:

- to receive Countess Matters, the Trust's magazine which is full of news and updates

Find out more on the Trust's website: [www.coch.nhs.uk](http://www.coch.nhs.uk) or use the QR code.



Contact our Membership Team to join as a member or with any membership or Governor enquiries: 01244 366429 or [membershipenquiriescoch@nhs.net](mailto:membershipenquiriescoch@nhs.net).



# HIGH QUALITY SUPPORT IN A CARING COMMUNITY

As part of the network of **Belong care villages**, **Belong Chester** provides high-quality 24-hour support and world-class dementia facilities in a vibrant community. The village is a stunning example of how advanced design and very high standards of care can provide a new quality of life for older people.

-  Specialist dementia and nursing care
-  Small households create a homely setting
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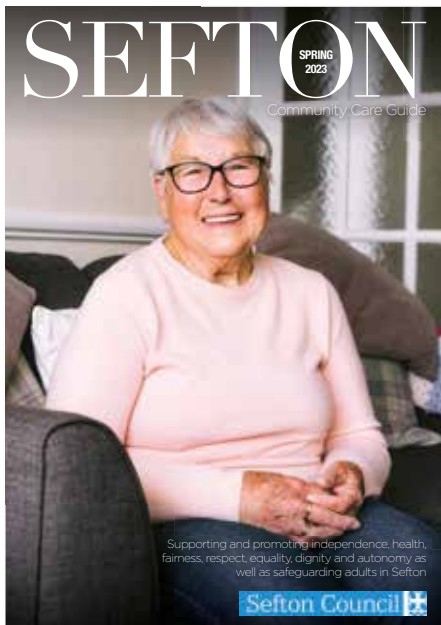
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