

The newsletter of Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust



Why QVH is a great place to work

When Elaine Ratcliffe first walked through the doors of our hospital in the 1970s to visit a friend who was a patient, little did she know that years later she'd be back and also start a family trend.

"I'd always wanted to be a nurse but when I was growing up women weren't encouraged to have careers," explains Elaine. "So at 14 I started serving tea in a nursing home and that's when I truly realised I wanted to work with people. In 2011, after a couple of different careers, my passion for wanting to make a difference was still there so when I was encouraged by a friend to apply for a role at Queen Victoria Hospital to become a healthcare assistant I thought I'd give it a go. Now I can't see myself going anywhere else."

Since then Elaine, who works in our Canadian Wing with adult patients, has become a dementia champion for the hospital and is progressing her career by completing her level 3 in healthcare clinical support.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Elaine's passion for making a difference has become infectious, and three years later daughter Emily joined our hospital too.

"The amount of times I went to the minor injuries unit as a kid I was destined to work at the hospital really," laughs Emily. "I'd listen to mum talking about work so often and then one day I had a lightbulb moment and realised that's where I needed to be too."

Emily joined us as a healthcare assistant, like her mum, but has also experienced life in Peanut, our children's ward, as a ward clerk.

"For me there's a real buzz working here," continues Emily. "No two days are the same and the reward you get from caring for patients is incredible. Compassion and care is what Queen Victoria Hospital is really good at."

"I find that the staff and patients really take care of you which is important," explains Elaine. "For me I've got a good work and home life balance. It's a great place to work and I'm finally doing what I was destined to do."

If you'd like to find out more about working with us please visit www.qvh.nhs.uk/work-with-us/



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Nationwide survey of prosthetic eyes

Did you know we're leading a new national study looking into comfort and outcomes for people with an artificial eye? As a specialist centre for reconstructive surgery, oculoplastics and prosthetic rehabilitation, this is an exciting opportunity for us to make a difference to the lives of our patients and those across the UK.

When somebody loses an eye due to damage or disease, they almost always choose to have an artificial eye rather than wear a patch. The artificial eye is carefully made by a prosthetics team like ours to perfectly match the existing eye. But patients can often suffer with dry eye symptoms, or have problems with depth perception which can make daily activities like going down stairs or pouring boiling water into a mug tricky.

Our principal maxillofacial prosthetist, Emma Worrell, is leading a national study exploring the quality of life for patients after eye loss, along with Raman Malhotra, our consultant ophthalmologist and oculoplastic surgeon. We have partnered with hospitals across the UK to enable as many patients as possible to be involved in the study. So far 984 have signed up.

Emma said: "The most commonly referenced book for adapting to monocular vision was first published in 1972; now it's time we find out the needs of artificial eye patients today. In understanding our current population we can better provide for our patients, and improve our patients' experience."

The study is being funded by an ocular award from the Institute of Maxillofacial Prosthetists and Technologists. It's also a National Portfolio study and fully supported by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Clinical Research Network.

To find out more about getting involved in the study please email Emma Worrell at emma.worrell@nhs.net You can also listen back to Emma and Raman talking to Dr Mark Porter on BBC Radio 4's Inside Health Programme about the study via this link:

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bbq1gt

Supporting up and coming researchers

To encourage researchers of the future, we offer the opportunity for fourth year medical students from Brighton and Sussex Medical School to work on a project, with one of our team as a supervisor. So far we've supported 36 studies. Current projects include 'The anatomy of flexor tendon repair' and 'Improving patient pathway for skin cancer referrals to tertiary centre'.

Why is research important?

- Research studies help doctors and other clinicians understand how to treat a particular disease or condition. It may benefit you, or others like you, in the future.
- If you take part in research, you may be one of the first to benefit from a new treatment.
- Almost all decisions about your care and treatment are made based on research.
- Patients may be invited to take part in a research study. You can also ask if there is any research you can be involved in.
- Most research studies are designed so that patients are only asked to do a couple of things in addition to their normal treatment, such as fill in a questionnaire, provide an extra blood sample or attend an extra clinic appointment.

Find out more at
www.qvh.nhs.uk/getting-involved-in-research



Patient feedback matters

Each week we receive feedback from our patients in many different ways including cards and letters sent to our wards and departments, comments posted on our social media pages or opinions given to our patient advice and liaison service. Whether it's the good, the bad, or the ugly, it's all helping us continually improve what we do.

We always strive to provide outstanding care and positive experiences for our patients and were delighted to receive some of the best feedback in the country in a national NHS survey. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) surveyed 72,778 patients who received care in 148 NHS acute and NHS foundation trusts.

Overall, we scored better than other trusts across almost all measures in the survey, compared to the previous year's adult inpatient survey results.

Areas where patients scored us particularly highly were:

- feeling they waited the right amount of time on the waiting list before being admitted and also not having to wait too long to get a bed on a ward
- feeling they had privacy, respect and dignity
- feeling they were well looked after by hospital staff
- having confidence and trust in the doctors, nurses and other clinical staff treating them
- agreeing staff did all they could to control pain
- being involved in decisions around care and treatment, and having confidence about decisions made by staff.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the survey.



Friends and family test

Did you know all NHS hospitals publish 'friends and family test' scores each month? For us it's an important way of knowing what our patients think of their experience in 'real time'.

Some of the feedback we received over the last few months included:

"I can honestly say that I was dreading coming into hospital, never having stayed in a ward before. But what a marvellous team of people you are, I absolutely love everyone here, so friendly and caring, nothing was too much trouble. Thank you so much for making my experience such a positive one." (*Margaret Duncombe ward*)

"I would go to no other place for my treatment. Very professional, felt part of family. Big thank you to all involved, very satisfied and would tell others how I was treated." (*Ross Tilley ward*)

"Wonderful and kind staff. Extremely understanding, helpful and extremely knowledgeable taking not just my accident as the issue but treating me as a whole." (*Burns unit*)

"Excellent welcome, care and aftercare for patient and family. Made to feel calm and comfortable and everything explained clearly. Great facilities and very clean. Thank you." (*Peanut ward*)

Read our latest friends and family feedback at

www.qvh.nhs.uk/friends-and-family-recommendations



Then and now

The NHS turned 70 last July which gave the nation the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of one of our most loved institutions, to appreciate the vital role it plays in our lives, and to recognise and thank NHS staff – the everyday heroes – who are there to support and care for us, day in, day out.

However, our own history pre-dates the NHS, back to 1863 when the East Grinstead Cottage Hospital was founded. After a number of incarnations as a small community hospital, the Queen Victoria Hospital, as we became known by the 1930s, moved to our current site in 1936. It was here that Sir Archibald McIndoe developed pioneering techniques in plastic surgery and a holistic approach to the treatment of wounded allied aircrew in World War II; changing the lives of a group of men later known as the Guinea Pig Club.

What hasn't changed is our commitment to innovation, treating the whole patient, the importance of sharing best practice and teaching the clinicians of the future. From pedicles (a skin grafting method for facial and hand reconstruction, using a tube of skin to keep good blood supply to tissue) to using a pineapple enzyme to treat burns, our hospital is dedicated to rebuilding lives each and every day, with the help of a diverse team bringing together different specialist skills.

Our vision for the future is to continue to be one of the best surgical hospitals in the country. We would like to:

- create new specialised surgical wards and critical care facilities alongside our operating theatres
- provide outpatient clinics closer to the car park at the front of the site, so that patients can find their way to appointments more quickly and easily
- have better space for our staff to relax and have meals when they are on a break
- create more parking on site and improve green transport options for staff and visitors.

For more information about our vision for the future visit www.qvh.nhs.uk/our-vision

Get in touch

We'd love to hear your stories about what QVH means to you. You can contact us via:



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Jack Ashton, best known for playing Rev. Tom Hereward in the BBC television series Call the Midwife, has given his support to our hospital charity – QVH Charity – by becoming its first ambassador.

Jack previously starred in 'The Guinea Pig Club' the theatre production which told the story of the pioneering plastic surgery and psychological support given by our hospital during WWII. And that's where he found out about the real impact Queen Victoria Hospital had and continues to have.

Speaking of his new ambassador role, Jack said: "I've had the pleasure of visiting the hospital and chatting to staff and have seen for myself what an incredibly special place it is. I'm excited to give my support to QVH Charity to help them continue to raise money to support the hospital by funding ground breaking research, providing equipment not routinely funded by the NHS, and making sure patients have the best possible experience of hospital."

Actor Jack Ashton becomes our first charity ambassador

Thank you to our fundraisers

Through the support of patients, family members and friends of the hospital, the QVH Charity was able to invest an amazing **£172,000** in our hospital in the last year in extra equipment and care above and beyond what is provided by the NHS! Looking for a challenge but need some inspiration?

Here are a few of our fundraisers to do just that:

Mike cycled an epic 980 miles in the Deloitte Ride Across Britain and raised £2,156.



Rachel, a former patient raised £1,335 doing the Richmond Half Marathon with two of her family.



Our plastic surgeons **Ben and Andy** swapped their scrubs for saddles as they completed the London-Surrey 100 and raised £1,547.



New runner **Chloe** completed the Hastings Half Marathon to say thank you after her Mum was treated at QVH, and raised £423.

There are still so many projects QVH Charity would like to fund with your support. Here's how you can get involved:

You can donate online through www.justgiving.com/qvh-nhs

Or by cheque, payable to 'QVH Charity' sent c/o Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Holtye Road, East Grinstead RH19 3DZ.

You can find out more about the charity at www.supportqvh.org





Outstanding patient experience



Pam Golton and Rebecca Spencer

Lindsay Winchester

Going the extra mile for our patients

When we asked our patients (past and present) to nominate staff they felt went the extra mile for them during their treatment or appointments for our annual outstanding patient experience award, we were overwhelmed with the response. It was won by Pam Golton and Rebecca Spencer our breast reconstruction nurse specialists, and Lindsay Winchester, one of our consultant orthodontists.

Our hospital is a leading centre for reconstructive breast surgery in the South East, with Pam and Rebecca on hand to help patients throughout their treatment. Comments from their nominations included: "they are kind, caring, good listeners, totally dedicated, professional and give you good honest advice and reassurance if you are worried about anything. Above all they just want to ensure you're ok. I really don't know how I would have coped without them."

One of their patients, Linda, helped us create a special film explaining in her own words why she was driven to nominate the duo <https://youtu.be/XMokceW8KKY>

Commenting on their award Pam and Rebecca said: "We are very much a team and it is lovely to be recognised for what in

essence is "just doing our job", but what a job! Helping ladies navigate what could potentially be the most emotional time of their lives is a privilege. Having recognition in this way encourages us to continue to strive to improve our practice and make a difference to those we care for".

Joint winner Lindsay has worked as an orthodontic consultant at our hospital for 24 years, but it was the combination of her clinical skills and being an inspiration to budding future dentists that really stood out.

One of her patients said: "I came under Lindsay's care at the age of 15 when I was having difficulty eating due to my irregular bite. Her dedication to her patients has been an inspiration and my recent surgery has shown me how the orthodontic and maxillofacial teams can transform people's lives. Lindsay has transformed me from a withdrawn adolescent to a confident young woman who has just begun studying dentistry."

Lindsay's patient Anna also helped us make a special film which you can watch <https://youtu.be/NYB-rX6M7Zg>

Commenting on her award Lindsay said: "I am really honoured and thrilled to be given this award. It means more than anything to be nominated by patients, as without a doubt this is the most rewarding part of my job, making a difference to people's lives."