

QVH NEWS

Spring/Summer 2025

Ian Francis holds the trophy for QVH

AWARDS
2025

HSJ PARTNERSHIP
AWARDS 2025



National award winners!

We've been awarded the **Most Effective Contribution to Clinical Redesign Award** at the Health Service Journal (HSJ) Partnership Awards 2025 for reducing patient wait times and unnecessary hospital appointments through a digital breathlessness pathway.

Our collaboration with med-tech company Feedback Medical was also shortlisted in the 'Best Contribution to Improving the Efficiency of NHS Services' category. We were recognised for our pilot project providing a straight-to-diagnostic breathlessness pathway using Feedback's Bleepa software. It has achieved significant improvements in efficiency and patient wait times and our team has been asked to share our best practice both regionally and nationally with others interested in adopting similar symptom-based pathways.

The Bleepa software allows GPs and our multidisciplinary team to collaborate digitally for patients needing diagnostic tests as part of a breathlessness pathway within our Community Diagnostic Centre suite of services. The pilot project saw a 63% reduction in patient waiting times from referral to treatment compared to the national target, significantly decreasing the number of patients waiting over six weeks.

The winners were selected following a two-stage judging process ahead of the awards ceremony. The judging panel was made up of 70+ influential figures within the healthcare community. All finalists and winners were judged against five clear criteria: ambition; outcome; spread; value and involvement (including details of how relevant staff, patients and partnerships worked together to realise the success).

Ian Francis, Deputy Chief Medical Officer at QVH, said:

"We are thrilled to win the HSJ Partnership Award for Most Effective Contribution to Clinical Redesign and that the success of the digital breathlessness pathway has been recognised by the HSJ judging panel.

"We have had keen interest in us sharing our best practice with others to adopt similar symptom-based pathways and have presented both regionally and nationally our key learnings. This collaboration shows the potential there is to maximise clinical and efficiency improvements for patients, with more pathways yet to come."

Dr Tom Oakley, CEO at Feedback Medical, comments: "We are delighted to win the HSJ Partnership Award 2025 with QVH. Together we have transformed the approach to outpatient services by providing a seamless digital journey for patients, from the point of initial referral through to the conclusion of the patient pathway, significantly reducing waiting times for patients, improving productivity for NHS staff and reducing unnecessary appointments."

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Rebuilding lives and supporting communities for a healthier future

Welcome!

Since our last edition of QVH News published in September there has been a lot going on in our hospital. We've published our *QVH Strategy 2025-2030* which sets out our ambitions for our patient services, as well as refreshed values and strategic objectives, shaped and co-produced with over 3,000 patients, volunteers, staff, health and care partners and a wide variety of stakeholders across Kent, Surrey, Sussex and beyond.

There is a great deal of change taking place nationally. You may have read or heard that the NHS landscape has shifted considerably: NHS England will be transferred back to the Department Health and Social Care and will be under direct ministerial control and while Integrated Care Boards will continue, their role is under review and will change, with an expectation that this will include commissioning services.



What does this mean for QVH? It is going to be a challenging year for us, as it will be for other NHS organisations. All provider trusts must deliver their services within the funding available and not spend more than they receive, also called a breakeven position. This will include a requirement to reduce cost. There will also be changes to the funding of services. We are working through how we can achieve the ambitions of our strategy we published before these changes were announced, whilst continuing to deliver excellent care for our patients and be a workplace where our colleagues feel supported to do just that.

In this edition of QVH News you will read about how our collaboration led to a national award; how we're investing in equipment to support patients closer to home; the part our QVH Charity is playing in supporting innovative care; and also how you can become more involved in your hospital.

While we know we have a difficult year ahead, it won't stop us striving to achieve more success for our patients and our colleagues. It's what we all come to work for.

AJago

Abigail Jago

Acting Chief Executive Officer & Chief Strategy Officer

P.S. if you use social media please follow us! We regularly share updates and news so you can always find out what QVH is working on there.





Sussex-wide first for QVH

A £400,000 investment in state-of-the-art laser equipment, means more than 1,000 burns patients will receive life-changing treatment here at QVH, their hospital of choice.

Laser treatment is used to reduce redness, itching, and tightness of scarring caused through a burn with the nearest sites offering this located in London or Essex. This equipment means our patients can continue to have their care delivered by the team they know best – and we are the only hospital across Sussex, Surrey, and Kent able to offer this laser treatment option onsite. For patients like Emily Fairbrass it means she can now go to the place she calls her 'second home.'

Emily, 30, suffered burns to her head, neck and face, when her long fair hair caught alight on an aromatic candle she had lit to take away the smell of the roast chicken she was cooking. It was the day before her 25th birthday in December 2019.

Emily said: "I was going out for the day and was cooking the chicken ready for when I got back later and wanted the candle to take away the smell. I was at home alone with my dog Cooper. I bent down to do something and all of a sudden I was on fire. I didn't really know what had happened.

"I tried to put the flame out with water from the tap, but I just couldn't. I then ran outside and a neighbour put the flames out."

Emily was taken to Medway Hospital by ambulance and was then transferred to QVH.

She had sustained a 7% flame burn to her face, neck and scalp, and was initially treated at QVH and underwent a skin graft. But she has had to go further afield from her home in Kent to get the laser treatment she needs. Emily said:

"The treatment I have had here over the years has been incredible, they have made such a difference.

"I have been going to Chelsea and Westminster from home in Kent and that can take two hours so to now be able to have my treatment here with people I really know is amazing for me. It feels like a family and we have a great bond between us all. It's like a second home to me."

Paul Drake, our Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon, who has treated Emily said: "When you have a burn it is life changing and it can be a long journey for people who have suffered a burn to return to the life they had before.

"Lasers make such a difference because they improve appearance, reduce tightness and this has a huge positive impact on the patient. It can be positively life-changing."

How do the lasers work?

Of the two lasers, the pulsed dye laser can **help to improve scars by reducing the redness and inflammation** which also helps lessen symptoms of itching or discomfort. These symptoms can affect a person's daily life impacting on sleep and other functional tasks.

The CO2 laser encourages **the production of new collagen** which improves the scar's appearance. Tight scars can reduce movement in a joint and impact on day to day living. Where there is a tightening of scar tissue the laser can be used to promote new healing with normal collagen fibres which leads to a softer scar and improved movement.



Home grown apprentices reaping rewards



Hayleigh Dawkins Registered Nurse Apprentice

"I came here with no hospital experience whatsoever. I feel like QVH has developed me. I am home grown."



QVH is an anchor institution. This means, as a large organisation rooted to our place, and with a connection to the local population, we can have a significant influence on the health and wellbeing of these communities. Part of this means offering employment opportunities to local people. One of the ways in which we do this is through apprenticeships.

For people, of any age, apprenticeships help develop rewarding careers, and allow employers the chance to develop a workforce with future ready skills.

Katharine Bond, our Organisational Development and Learning Manager, said: "Apprenticeships are an excellent way of accessing training that would otherwise be unattainable. The opportunity to work and learn allows a broader cohort of applicants, this allows a diverse workforce with different lifetime experiences coming with a broad range of knowledge and skills.

"By providing on the job learning, you create a workforce that understands the role requirements, has hands on experience and embeds teamwork. We have had great results in building the workforce as well as growing our own, it gives us a chance to see the potential in people."

People like Hayleigh Dawkins (above), Registered Nurse Apprentice, whose QVH journey highlights the opportunities apprentice courses can provide. She said:

"I feel very lucky to be honest. I came here with no hospital experience whatsoever. I feel like QVH has developed me. I am home grown – I always say that to my manager.

"This place has given me the opportunities to expand and progress, so I feel very lucky to be able to do it. The support I have had here has been great, absolutely amazing."

Like QVH Sleep technician Kimberley Healey, who said: "I have been incredibly lucky to have the full support of my manager and team around me. I feel privileged to have been given this opportunity, and I am enjoying every moment of my experience.



Kimberley Healey
Sleep Technician

"My plan is to apply for the Level 6 apprenticeship after completing my Level 4. I am looking forward to seeing what the future holds for me and my career in Sleep and Respiratory."

And people like Adriana Barbu, who said: **"These two apprenticeships in Healthcare Science feed my hunger for knowledge, and one of the purposes, an important one, is to gain understanding of what I'm doing."**

"Coming to QVH and getting on the apprenticeships was the best thing that could happen to me."



Adriana Barbu
Senior Ophthalmic Technician

QVH and the Apprenticeship Levy

The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy back in 2017 has enabled QVH to expand the number and variety of apprenticeships it can offer, and it was one of the first NHS Trusts in Sussex to procure and offer apprenticeships when the levy started. Since then about **150 people have completed apprenticeships at QVH**, with between 30 and 40 apprentices at the Trust at any one time, many of them local people.

Apprenticeships can be clinical, such as a Nursing Associate, who work with healthcare support workers and registered nurses, or non-clinical, such as in business administration.

If you are interested in finding out more about our apprenticeship opportunities, please contact QVH.apprenticeships@nhs.net





New scanner a cut above for Jane

Investing in state-of-the-art equipment to ensure our patients receive the best care they can is a priority for QVH, and in April we were able to celebrate the opening of a brand new bone scanning machine as part of our diagnostic services.

Half of women over 50 will suffer fractures due to osteoporosis and a fifth of men. Fractures are the fourth greatest cause of disability in the UK. Finding osteoporosis early can prevent life-changing fracture, which could follow everyday occurrences like coughing or falling.

The dual energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) scanner, which cost **£90,660**, is a quick and painless way to check bone health, measuring the strength and condition of someone's bones, and screening patients for osteoporosis and other bone-weakening conditions.

The arrival of the scanner means that QVH patients can receive their treatment closer to home rather than need to go to elsewhere in Sussex, like Eastbourne, or Lewes, for example, which they have had to do previously, and for other patients it means they can have their treatment at the hospital of their choice.

Patient Jane Stewart-Parry fits that bill and she cut the ribbon on the scanner when it arrived at QVH, just moments before she became the first person to use it.

Jane, 64, who is from Battle, in East Sussex, said: "Once I knew that the scanner was coming here and that I could be referred here, I wanted to come.

"It is amazing, and I am so proud that I am the first patient to be scanned. My family are really excited too. My mother died from an undiagnosed osteoporosis condition so it is great that I can come here, to the hospital of my choice, and see where I am at.

"I want to make sure I get the right treatment, to make sure I can be monitored as we go along. It brings peace of mind and awareness too, for my two children, especially my daughter, who is 29.

"Cutting the ribbon was fantastic – I shall dine out on that for a while, don't you worry."

Edmund Tabay, Chief Nursing Officer (pictured above with Jane), added: "The introduction of this scanner is part of our overall community diagnostic programme, and will help patients in our local area and across Sussex, have this treatment. There is a national shortage of DEXA scanners, so we are delighted to include one in our quality offer to patients."

QVH wide awake to change for patients



Did you know we are part of the **wide awake club**? It is helping hundreds of patients have pioneering treatment where they want to have it while freeing up theatre capacity on site here at the hospital.

Wide awake refers to part of a technique used on hand and wrist patients that we began using during Covid called WALANT – Wide Awake Local Anaesthetic No Tourniquet – that was co-founded by Canadian surgeon Don Lalonde and Ali Phillips from the UK in the early 2000's.

The technique sees patients having a local rather than general or regional anaesthetic, which removes the need for a painful tourniquet, and takes away the requirement for treatment in an operating theatre. The technique can be applied in clinic or in the field.

For QVH that means we can be more flexible in where we operate – saving patients time and travel - and reduce waiting lists and free up space on operating lists.

Rikki Mistry, our Consultant Plastic Surgeon, said:

“This began back during Covid when we had to think of ways in which we could work more flexibly. Since then we have developed this into our day to day work.

“The procedure is less invasive, with no general anaesthetic, safer with no sedation, they recover much more quickly from the operation than before, and we can do it closer to people's home at clinics.

“For me alone, I do this operation on two or three patients a week away from site, and as a group of hand surgeons at QVH we are travelling to Hastings, Medway, Dartford. This is the equivalent of half a day's operating list and the team will do hundreds a year.”

The WALANT method is used primarily for carpal tunnel, finger trigger, joint replacement, and Dupuytren's contracture, a condition when one or more fingers bend in towards the palm.

Advantages of WALANT for patients

- ✓ There's no need for an extra trip to a hospital for pre-admission tests.
- ✓ There's no need for sedation.
- ✓ With reduced anaesthetic recovery time, less time is spent at the hospital or the clinic.
- ✓ It's not necessary for the patient to have someone to accompany them – this is often the case with sedation.
- ✓ You can talk to the surgeon during the surgery for post-operative advice on how to look after the hand and how much time you should take off work, etc.
- ✓ No need to have a tourniquet, which has been shown to cause pain if on for longer than 15 minutes.
- ✓ No need to alter, stop or change any of your regular medication.
- ✓ You can sit up and leave after the surgery once your discharge paperwork is complete, without having to recover from sedation or a general anaesthetic.

Charity is the pathway to world leading care

A world-leading piece of equipment paid for by our QVH Charity is providing life changing treatment for our patients.

Our facial palsy and head & neck cancer patients can now receive treatment using the very latest nerve monitoring equipment. This means patients like Ravi Adelekan, can rediscover his beaming smile that he lost after brain surgery at a different hospital made his facial palsy worsen.

Ravi, 9, found fame in Britain's Got Talent, and he charmed the nation with his Ravi's Dream Team Choir.

He had his operation to treat the facial palsy here in 2023, and the result meant the world of difference as these pictures show.



November 2022



January 2025

It is fund-raising efforts by local people, volunteers, supporters, companies or people wanting to give something back for the treatment they have received here that helps the charity buy things that go above and beyond that which the NHS would ordinarily pay for.

This has helped the Facial Palsy team develop into one of the best in the world, which see members of the team travelling across the UK and further afield giving presentations on the work we do.

Ruben Kannan, our Consultant Surgeon Plastic Surgeon in Facial Reanimation, said:

"We are the only centre in the world currently performing an advanced minimal access type of surgery for facial reanimation."

"The advantages of this surgery is that it is safer, faster, cheaper to perform and more effective than current methods of surgery.

"This is fast becoming the gold standard surgery for acute and early facial palsies, for example after brain tumour excisions, strokes etc.

"We have already published this technique in peer-reviewed journals and are teaching other doctors around the world, how to perform this surgery, for the benefit of their patients as well. This ties in with the legacy of the Queen Victoria Hospital being the mecca of plastic surgery, on a global scale."



The nerve monitor used as part of Ravi's treatment cost **£15,000**, which is a lot of money, we know. But every pound helps towards buying equipment like this which has such a profoundly positive difference in the lives of our patients.

Camilla Lane, Head of Fundraising and Voluntary Services, said: "It is wonderful to see the difference the work of the Charity can make for our patients. Just look at Ravi before and after the operation.

"Helping our clinical teams by raising the money that will provide equipment for them to deliver better outcomes for our patients is what drives us every day.

"Every little helps and there are many ways to do this whether by donating, organising an event, leaving a legacy or by volunteering at fundraising events. We would love to hear from anyone who would like to get involved."

You can make a difference



If you want to find out how to get involved, find out more about QVH Charity or **make a donation** please get in touch by emailing our team on qvh.supportqvh@nhs.net or visit our website www.supportqvh.org to find out more.

QVH Star Awards 2025

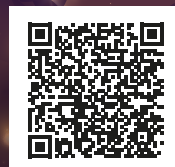
Nominate a member of staff!

QVH Charity funds our annual celebration of the people who make QVH special. Get involved by nominating a member of staff for our

Outstanding Patient Experience award

The hospital wants to hear about staff who have shown exceptional care and compassion – whether it's the person who helped book your appointment, or served you a cuppa in the canteen, through to the nurse, therapist or doctor who cared for you. This could be in person or through a virtual consultation.

The deadline for nominations is 14 July 2025.



John tells us what it's like to be

a governor

One of our public governors, John Harold, is in his second stint here at QVH. Here, he talks Fab Four, garden centres and why he came back to the Trust.

Tell us a bit about your background?

I was born in Liverpool and went to the same school – **Liverpool Institute High School** – as two of the Beatles – **George and Paul**. I studied Russian at Nottingham University, after which I moved into commerce, first in sales and then in marketing, before joining Combe International, an American owned company, where I became UK managing director. In my spare time I also enjoy playing tennis and have recently taken up Padel tennis.

What inspired you to become a governor?

When I retired I wanted to become more involved in the community and becoming a governor at QVH seemed an ideal way of doing this as one of our key duties is to represent the interests of members and members of the public. I first became a governor in 2012 and remained for a total of 9 years. I was a member of many committees and Chair of the governor led Appointments Committee. After I stepped down I really missed the satisfaction that I got from being a governor, so I nominated myself for a public governor role in 2024 and was appointed. I started my term in August 2024.

What have you enjoyed most or found rewarding in the role?

The staff at QVH are wonderful and will always go the extra mile to help people, whether it's in the amazing surgery or services they offer, or just helping someone find their way around the hospital. They are always willing to give time to people. I also really enjoy working with my fellow governors and the hospital management to try to make things better for staff and patients. It is always interesting to visit the hospital and talk to staff and patients regarding their experiences at QVH and how we can make things better for them.

It is also very interesting to learn more about the workings of the NHS. It is certainly a very unique organisation that has its own ways of doing things.



What do you see as your greatest successes?

I am chair of the governor led Governor Working Group for Public Engagement and I am very pleased with the presentation that we developed about the hospital, covering its history, the current services it offers, the strategy, how a foundation trust operates, the role of a governor and details about the QVH Charity and how you can get involved. The purpose of the presentation is to engage with foundation trust members and members of the public to increase awareness of what the hospital offers to the local community. The presentation has been well received by local groups. I also collected for the QVH Charity in Haskins Garden Centre just before Christmas and was very moved by the generosity of the many people who donated and shared their very positive experiences and the great affection they had for the hospital.

Would you recommend becoming an NHS governor?

If you want to support your local hospital and have sufficient time to give to the role, then you would find the role of governor extremely worthwhile and rewarding, and I would thoroughly recommend it.

What do you want to tell members about QVH?

It is an outstanding hospital with amazing staff who are dedicated to their patients. It also provides excellent services for the local population, such as the Minor Injuries Unit. Our Council of Governors meetings are held in public which means that all members and members of the public are welcome to attend and observe. I would encourage you to do so if you would like to learn more about the Trust and our work.

How do you describe being a governor in three words?

Fulfilling satisfying humbling!

Could you become a QVH governor or member?

Did you know you can be an important part of QVH by signing up to become a public member? It is free and easy to join and it gives you the chance to show your support, hear our news, stand to be a governor and vote in public governor elections. Interested? You must be aged 18 or over and live in Kent, Surrey, East and West Sussex or South London. To join please complete the form you can find on our website at www.qvh.nhs.uk in the members section. By giving us your email address we can keep in touch with you.

Our next public governor election will be held during 2026. We are looking for members of all backgrounds and experiences to put themselves forward.

For more information about becoming a member or a public governor, or are already a member but want to update your details, please email qvh.corporategovernance@nhs.net