



# With you, for you

MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025

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# Welcome

We start this edition with a long-overdue celebration of our ward assistants, a role which our community hospitals team has been developing over the last couple of years. One of those ward assistants was also recognised in our recent Better Care Together awards – all the winners and the usual lovely photos are inside.

The GHC charity is going from strength to strength – Occupational Health Technician Gosia was one of several colleagues who ran the London Landmarks Half Marathon to raise money; there's more from her in the Final Word. We also have a host of fundraising activities planned across the summer.

There's also a look at Pets as Therapy, a new mural at Wotton Lawn, farewell to a stalwart non-executive director and a triple-bill of positive survey results: from the annual NHS Staff Survey, Community Mental Health Survey and latest PLACE assessments.



## Get in touch

We welcome your ideas, thoughts and suggestions. If you would prefer to get your newsletter by email, please let us know. Please contact the communications team:

 **0300 421 7146**  
 **GHC.comms@ghc.nhs.uk**

## Our Board has bid farewell to Non-Executive Director, Jan Marriott, who is retiring



**Trust Chair, Graham Russell, paid tribute to Jan's dedication and passion for health services in Gloucestershire. He said she had been huge advocate for people who use services and would be greatly missed by colleagues both in the Trust and across our communities.**

Jan has worked in Gloucestershire since 2002 and for some years was Co-Chair of the Gloucestershire Learning Disability and the Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Partnership Boards as well as being the Independent Chair of the Gloucestershire Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board.

A nurse by background, Jan was previously Director of Nursing in the NHS in Worcestershire and West Gloucestershire as well as with a national independent sector care organisation. She was also Director of Clinical Change in the Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust.

# HIGHLIGHTING WARD ASSISTANTS



**Around two years ago our Trust decided to create a new role of ward assistant to complement the existing teams in our community hospitals.**

Since their introduction we've refined these positions to complement our nursing and facilities teams, and our ward assistants have been coming into their own in the way they enhance our inpatient care.

They do whatever is needed that day – making beds, restocking supplies, filling water jugs, clearing plates. They also provide valuable company, interaction and recreation for patients, whether that's conversation, reminiscence, games, activities or accompanying them outside.

Cirencester Hospital's Coln Ward Manager Karen Fawcett nominated Ward Assistant Alex Shingler for a Better Care Together Award in the Making a Difference category – an award which she won.

Karen said: "We can't live without her! She's energetic and is amazing at getting the patients on-board with a fun activity. She also works alongside the teams with other tasks such as bed-making, meal service, assisting anywhere as needed.

**"The patients are engaging with therapy and nursing rehabilitation – she has brought joy to the team. She has such creative ideas – even a karaoke machine now, and she gets us involved and singing along."**

Acting Ward Manager Amy Lister, at Stroud Hospital, paid similar tribute to Ward Assistant Anna Ryan who joined their team last November.

She said: **"We recently had a patient who had loved crochet but had lost her dexterity. Anna essentially became her hands; the patient taught her how to crochet and together they crocheted a hat. The patient had started to lose her hair and was self-conscious about it, so the hat also helped with her confidence.**

**"She gets to know patients so well, she is also a sounding board for them and when able joins our team meetings and provides an important perspective – the patient's view."**

Dawn Allen, Service Director for Community Hospitals and Urgent Care added: **"The activities and company they provide are amazing adjuncts to our rehabilitation and complex discharge planning. We're delighted at how much impact the ward assistants are having, and to have secured such capable, caring and kind colleagues into these roles."**



# BETTER CARE TOGETHER AWARDS 2025 – THE WINNERS



**Our Better Care Together awards were held at Hatherley Manor Hotel, near Gloucester, on Wednesday 9 April.**

More than 130 colleagues gathered to celebrate the occasion, which followed a record number of nominations – 238 in total!

Trust Chair, Graham Russell, said: **“It was a privilege to be able to celebrate not only everyone who attended but everyone who was nominated. The real winners, though, are the people of Gloucestershire, who benefit from our colleagues’ hard work and dedication every day so it’s fantastic to have an opportunity to say a big thank you to everyone.”**

The overall winners were:

**Working Together:** Wheelchair Assessment Service

**Always Improving:** Vale Stroke Rehab Botulinum Toxin injection service

**Respectful and Kind:** Mohammed Moolla, Service Desk Analyst

**Making a Difference:** Alex Shingler, Ward Assistant, Cirencester Hospital

**Rising Star:** Emilie Morgan-Moody, Mental Health Nurse, CAMHS

**Outstanding Achievement:** Chris Stock, Expert by Experience

**Valuing our Communities:** Children and Young People’s Mental Health Navigation Hub

**Team of the Year:** Gloucester Inner City District Nursing Team.

For full details of everyone shortlisted, visit our Trust website.





# PETS AS THERAPY – A BREED APART



**Pets As Therapy (PAT) is a national charity that aims to enhance the health and wellbeing of thousands of people in communities across the UK.**

The Cotswolds Lakes Pets As Therapy volunteer team bring joy to colleagues, patients and visitors at Cirencester Hospital every week and also provides support in Lechlade, Fairford, North and South Cerney, Kemble and other locations in Cirencester.

Led by former nurse and midwife Dr Helen Sweet, the team dedicate their own time to regularly visit the hospital to lift the spirits of all those they come across.

We joined Helen with her Cavapoo Ci Bach (Welsh for little dog!) and fellow volunteers Lorraine and cavalier King Charles spaniel Tricky, Lynne and cavalier King Charles spaniel Reggie, Fi and black labrador Inca and Roz and cocker spaniel Alfie for a visit to Coln Ward. visit with Coln Ward Manager Karen Fawcett.

The visit took in wards and departments across the site, where the team spent a calm, but busy time visiting everyone who wanted to meet and stroke the well-behaved furry friends. Indeed, it takes a special kind of temperament to be a Pets as Therapy dog, as Helen explains:

**“They have to be very safe and secure - we always insist on the dogs being calm and quiet and gentle. We welcome volunteers for people who would like to work with us and provide training and support, and we do all the necessary checks for the hospital such as DBS checks. We're very careful to make sure the patients want to see the dogs, because not all people do. But it does make a difference - you can actually see the difference over a period of between five to ten minutes of just contact and being with the dog - you also see it with the staff who come down and they might be a bit stressed and, you know, they've had a tough day and they come and stroke the dogs and I think it cheers them up”.**



Visits by PAT Teams also boost the mental health of patients, as well as visitors and hospital staff. Ward Manager Karen really values the visits:

**“The patients’ faces light up when they see the dogs when the volunteers visit them each week, they interact with the patients with a friendly wag and soulful eyes.**

**“Hospitals can be scary places for some people and the dogs and their friendly volunteer owners can break the ice and make the space a little bit more welcoming.**

**“The dogs also visit monthly especially for the staff at the hospital - our shared aim is for the visits to help make the staff feel appreciated and valued.”**

If you'd like to learn more about Pets As Therapy, the support they provide and how you can support them, visit:  
**[petsastherapy.org](http://petsastherapy.org)**



An inclusive event to promote health and wellbeing

**This year's annual Big Health Day will take place at Oxstalls Sports Park in Gloucester on Friday 13 June.**

Big Health Day is an annual event for people with a physical or learning disability, sensory loss or mental health support needs. It aims to be a fun and inclusive event which encourages people to participate in sport, physical exercise and social activities and to engage with services and organisations which can provide support.

Last year the event also coincided with Carers Week and hosted various carer-support organisations as part of the event. Big Health Day falls within Carers Week 2025 and we hope to involve carer organisations in the plans again.

If you have any questions about this event you can email the team at:

**[Bighealth25@ghc.nhs.uk](mailto:Bighealth25@ghc.nhs.uk)**

To find out more about this year's Big Health Day, visit:

**[www.ghc.nhs.uk/who-we-are/big-health/](http://www.ghc.nhs.uk/who-we-are/big-health/)**

# Apprenticeship Awards – the winners!

**NATIONAL  
APPRENTICESHIP  
WEEK 2025**

**Our annual GHC Apprenticeship Week Awards are a key part of celebrating National Apprenticeship Week each year.**

It provides a great opportunity for us to celebrate and acknowledge the commitment and contribution of all our apprentices and T-level students as well as those who support them including managers, mentors and our Apprenticeship and Widening Participation team.

We're delighted to announce the winners of our annual GHC National Apprenticeship Week Awards 2025...

## **Clinical Apprentice of the Year**

**Winner:** Debbie Blackman

**Special Recognition Award:** Katie Williams

## **Non-Clinical Apprentice of the Year**

**Winner:** Michelle Bethell

**Special Recognition Award:** Agnes Zivcakova

## **T-Level Student of the Year**

**Winner:** Connor Emberlin-Jones

**Special Recognition Award:** Kay Townsend and the team supporting her at Tewkesbury Theatres.

## **Motivational Mentor of the Year**

**Winner:** Dawn Allen

**Special Recognition Award:** Gemma Holmes.

Congratulations to everyone who was nominated this year – it is an achievement to be short-listed, and we are proud of you all.

We'd also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has taken the time to write a nomination – and to the judges who had the difficult job of selecting the winners this year.

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## **Positive Community Mental Health Survey Results for Trust**

**The latest results of the annual Care Quality Commission Community Mental Health Survey are out and the Trust is highlighted as performing 'better than expected'.**

Nationally, the survey summarises the experiences of 14,619 people who used NHS mental health services between 1st April 2024 and 31st May 2024. The survey asked people questions about how their care

and treatment was organised, planned and reviewed, as well as crisis care, support and wellbeing, and overall evaluations of their care.

GHC was one of only four Trusts in the country to be rated 'Better than Expected' alongside NAVIGO Health and Social Care, Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Trust and Camden and Islington NHS FT.



# STAFF SURVEY RESULTS INDICATE HEALTHY TRUST



**The 2024 Staff Survey results have been published, providing a detailed annual view of the Trust as a place to work.**

The high-level overview shows the Trust in a healthy position, with higher scores than average for comparable organisations and a great response rate indicating excellent engagement with the survey.

Chief Executive Douglas Blair said:  
**"I'm really encouraged to see increasing numbers of people taking part in this survey each year, as these surveys are most helpful when there is as big a response as possible. The overall results are generally very positive and compare well with similar Trusts across the country.**

**"It's great to see that we continue to compare well when it comes to colleagues recommending the Trust as a place to work and to receive care and treatment. This reputation helps us keep the talented colleagues we have and gives us a platform to recruit more people to the Trust."**

The response rate of 61% was up from 58% in 2023 and 55% the year before among substantive colleagues.

More than four in five colleagues (81.2%) say care of patients and service users is the Trust's priority. Nearly three quarters (71.5%) would recommend the Trust as a place to work, and a similar proportion (76.3%) would be happy with the standard of care for a friend or relative.

Groups of questions from the survey are divided between the seven themes of the NHS People Promise, plus Morale and Staff Motivation. The Trust scored higher than the average for similar Trusts (\*) in all nine themes.

The national NHS Staff Survey website has the full results for the Trust, and other Trusts across the country, as well as summaries of national data, comparisons and dashboards.



## SECOND IN COUNTRY FOR CLEANLINESS

A report published in the Health Service Journal placed our Trust second in the national league table of mental health trusts for cleanliness - scoring a fantastic 99.99%! The data came from the latest PLACE assessments - Patient-Led Assessment of the Care Environment.

# MSK Community Appointment Days



**Stratford Park Leisure Centre in Stroud was the venue for the Trust's very first Musculo Skeletal (MSK) Community Appointment Day in March.**

A joint initiative between the MSK physiotherapy and podiatry services, the community appointment days provide an opportunity for people to come along, meet clinicians, and discuss their MSK-related needs and concerns.

On arrival, visitors are invited to join a 'What Matters to You' conversation with a registered clinician. These discussions are designed to help our physiotherapists and podiatrists understand a person's musculoskeletal health.

These initial conversations provide a clear focus of what next steps should be. These include advice and guidance on how the person can manage their condition, and/or the opportunity for them to take part in a taster group exercise session or one-to-one physiotherapy or podiatry consultation.

Community partner organisations are also present throughout the day to offer support in a wide range of areas. The main focus of the community appointment days is to offer guidance and advice to people with MSK-related health issues and provide timely access to services where appropriate.

## Nutrition and Hydration Week 2025

**Nutrition and Hydration Week (17-23 March) is an annual campaign which focuses on the links between our health and what we eat and drink.**

Nutrition and Hydration Week is a reminder that we should all try to make conscious choices daily, whether it's opting for water instead of sugary drinks, or adding more veg to our plates.

The theme for our Trust's campaign this year was 'Bone Health' and, as usual, our



facilities teams hosted various events and activities across our hospitals and sites throughout the week to promote the importance of healthy eating and hydration among our patients and colleagues.

# COMMUNITY BLOOD PRESSURE AND HEALTH CHECKS



Our Community Outreach team, together with One Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Partnership, are supporting the Blood Pressure UK campaign 'Know Your Numbers', in a bid to reduce heartattacks and stroke.

The team are out and about offering simple health checks at community venues across Gloucestershire, providing people with the opportunity to have a chat about how they might make positive improvements to their health and wellbeing, discuss any concerns they may have about their health and get a free blood pressure check.

For further information, and to find out where you can find them over the coming months, visit our website: [www.ghc.nhs.uk/news/community-blood-pressure-and-health-checks](http://www.ghc.nhs.uk/news/community-blood-pressure-and-health-checks)

## LD HEALTH SCREENING SERVICE

Our Trust has a new learning disability screening team, aimed at supporting access and attendance at screening appointments.

The team is currently supporting with access to diabetic eye screening, cervical screening, breast screening, bowel cancer screening and abdominal aortic aneurysm screening.

We provide information and training to raise awareness of these programmes among people with a learning disability, their families and carers.

We also work with screening providers, such as GP surgeries, to support people with learning disabilities to attend. More information is available on the Trust website at [www.ghc.nhs.uk](http://www.ghc.nhs.uk)

## Three new Public Governors have been elected to our Council of Governors

Our new Governors are:

**Gloucester** – Leighton-Lee Pettigrew

**Cheltenham** – Joy Hibbins

**Stroud** – Jan Lawry

Our Council of Governors is a vital link between the Trust and our communities. NHS Foundation Trusts share all the same values, quality and safety standards as NHS Trusts, but they are 'owned' by their members who elect a Council of Governors to represent the views of members, patients, staff, partner organisations and the public. The Council of Governors works alongside the Trust's Board of Directors to help local communities and staff have a greater say in the strategic direction of the Trust, and how services are developed and delivered by the Trust. You can read more about our Council of Governors in the 'Who We Are' section on our website.





# GHC CHARITY UPDATE

## Who we are and what we do

Our Charity helps to fund additional resources, enhanced patient care and improved therapeutic environments, outside the core funding of NHS.

Charitable Funds are also used for staff welfare and improving the working and learning environments throughout the Trust. These benefits could not be offered without your generosity.

## Run for Charity

Support our Charity by running, walking, cycling or swimming. We have a range of events available and if something else appeals to you please get in contact using the below details.

We would like as many people as possible to get involved so if you are interested in an event but don't feel like you can reach a target, get in touch and we can discuss how we can help.

All our Run for Charity events are open to colleagues, patients, friends and family.

Events include:

- Tour of Pembrokeshire Cycle Ride (60 Miles) - 24 May
- 160ft bungee jump, Bristol - 16 August
- Run Cheltenham - 21 September
- Inflatable 5k/10k Cheltenham - 29 Sept
- Royal Parks Half Marathon - 12 October

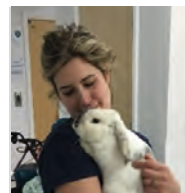
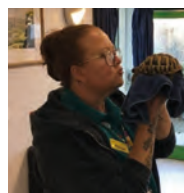
To find out about taking part in these events get in touch.

## Grant News

We have been the lucky recipient of a grant from the Severn Trent Community Fund. This grant will help to convert a disused space at Charlton Lane Hospital into a green space and allotment for patients and staff. Keep an eye out for images of this transformation as it happens.



## What we have funded – January – March



Good day Farm – Charlton Lane Hospital



Chestnut Ward Mural – Charlton Lane Hospital

## Donate to our Charity

Please consider donating to our Charity at the below links. If you would like to fundraise for us, please get in contact at the below email for a fundraiser's agreement.

[www.ghc.nhs.uk/ghccharity](http://www.ghc.nhs.uk/ghccharity)

## Contact us

For more information, please contact [charity@ghc.nhs.uk](mailto:charity@ghc.nhs.uk)

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram:  
**GHC Charity.**

# Macmillan Next Steps spreads the word with new podcast series



**Our team at Macmillan Next Steps has stepped into the digital age with a new series of podcasts.**

They offer an NHS specialist cancer rehabilitation service which provides a number of services and courses to support anyone living in Gloucestershire who has been diagnosed with breast, prostate, lung, head, neck, colorectal, gynaecology, haematological or upper gastrointestinal cancer.

In episode one, **'Returning to Work After Cancer'** Therapies Assistant Practitioner Katie Clive talks to Lisa Izod, Business Manager for Ambulatory Care at the Trust, who was diagnosed with cancer in 2020. She speaks about the physical and psychological challenges she faced when returning to work following her treatment.

She also talks about how, with the support of Katie and the Macmillan Next Steps team, she has learned the coping mechanisms needed to overcome some of the challenges she has faced – particularly when it comes to managing fatigue.

In episode two, **'Recipe for Health'**, Katie and Community Specialist Dietitian Jo Sansom speak with Karen, Nicky and Claire, who recently attended the Recipe for Health course

Recipe for Health is a six-week programme for people who have received a cancer diagnosis, which provides information and support to help them adopt a healthy lifestyle through diet and exercise, during and post cancer treatment

Karen, Nicky and Claire talk about their experience of attending the Recipe for Health course, and how it has given them confidence, strength and control, during and following their cancer journeys.

Both episodes can be found on the podcast hosting site Podbean ([www.podbean.com](http://www.podbean.com)) by searching 'Macmillan Next Step'. Links are also available in the news section of our website.

# MURAL AT GREYFRIARS UNIT



**The Greyfriars Psychiatric Unit at Wotton Lawn Hospital is enjoying a stunning new outlook, thanks to a fantastic new mural commissioned by the Trust's Charitable Funds.**

Former Engagement, Activity and Physical Health (EAP) team lead Gavin Jones came up with the idea of brightening up the unit's communal area and was instrumental in getting the project off the ground.

The mural, a sweeping landscape depicting rolling hills and a winding river, was hand-painted by Brandon's Murals, a Gloucestershire-based business specialising in large-scale wall murals. Unit Manager Alice Bayntun said: **"We realised how uninspiring some of our communal areas can appear, with lots of blank walls and outdated pictures. The purpose of this mural was to make the space more inviting and encompass some of the beauty we have within our county.**

**"The river aspect of the mural will also be used for patients to provide feedback about their journey while on Greyfriars, with the analogy in mind that admission can be like travelling along a river - recognising**

**emotions are fluid like a river and can ebb and flow. Sometimes the water will be calm, while other times it can be turbulent.**

**"The mural was co-produced with patients, who were involved in the design and choice of location. This project also aligns with the principles of Safewards; making the ward a more colourful and welcoming space. Patients are more likely to respect their environment and, in turn, be more open to creating a positive therapeutic relationship with peers and staff. It also helps to personalise the space and make it feel less institutional.**

Alice continued: **"Choosing to commission a mural of a local area of beauty was very purposeful - acknowledging how this image can promote a sense of familiarity and comfort to patients.**

**"At times, when being nursed on a PICU, patients may feel disorientated or isolated from the wider community. A mural depicting local landmarks and nature from the community can create a sense of comfort and continuity. It can also be used as focal point of reflection, dialogue, and mindfulness exercises."**



# Competition

## Win a family ticket to Dean Forest Railway



Dean Forest Railway runs heritage locomotives along four-and-a-half miles of track in beautiful woodland, from Lydney to Parkend. They run steam train services on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from mid-March to early November, as well as Christmas trips and evening specials - including Fish and Chip Suppers and Murder Mysteries.

They have kindly offered a family ticket for a steam train ride for two adults and two children valid from May 2025 - May 2026.

For a chance to win, please send your details to [ghc.comms@ghc.nhs.uk](mailto:ghc.comms@ghc.nhs.uk) or write to Communications Team, Edward Jenner Court, Brockworth, Gloucester, GL3 4AW, including your contact details.

A winner will be drawn at random after the closing date. The closing date for this competition is Friday 16 May 2025.

# Recipe

## FOUR SEASONS PIZZA RECIPE



PREP  
15  
MINUTES

COOK  
15  
MINUTES

SERVES  
4

### Ingredients

- One 23cm pizza base
- 1g tomato purée
- 2 tomatoes, sliced
- 50g ready-grated mozzarella
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian mixed herbs
- 25g sliced wafer-thin ham, chopped
- 25g pineapple pieces in natural juice, drained
- 2 mushrooms (cup or button), thickly sliced
- 25g cooked chicken (or turkey), chopped

### Method

1. Set Preheat the oven to 200C (fan 180C, gas mark 6). Place the pizza base on a large baking sheet. Spoon the tomato purée on top and spread it evenly over the surface.
2. Arrange the tomatoes on top. Scatter with half the mozzarella, then sprinkle with the herbs. Arrange the ham over a quarter of the pizza, along with the pineapple pieces.
3. Arrange the mushrooms over a second quarter of the pizza. Put the cooked chicken or turkey over a third quarter of the pizza. Leave the last quarter as it is.
4. Sprinkle the rest of the mozzarella over the whole pizza, then bake for 12 to 15 minutes until the cheese is bubbling. Let cool for a few moments before slicing and serving.

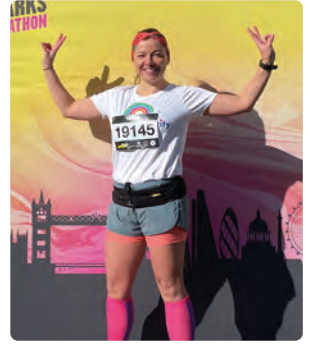
### Information:

Ready-grated mozzarella is better for pizza toppings, as the whole cheese is tricky to grate.

For more healthy recipes visit:  
[www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes](http://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes)

# Final word

**Gosia Pietka talks about her work with the Occupational Health team and running for the Trust charity.**



## **What does your role at the Trust involve?**

I've been proud to work for the NHS since 2019, as part of the Occupational Health Team at GHC. I'm an Occupational Health Technician, and I run weekly health screening clinics for staff — including hearing tests, lung function tests, skin assessments, forklift medicals, and more. I have a background in nutrition, which I love incorporating into well-being clinics. Many people want to make healthy changes in their lifestyle, and being able to offer guidance and support is the most rewarding part of my day. I really enjoy connecting with people, helping them feel better, and being part of their journey.

## **You recently took on a challenge for the Trust charity – what was that and why?**

On 6th April 2025, I ran the London Landmarks Half Marathon to raise money for the charity — an experience I will never forget. Sport has always played a role in my life, but this was something truly special.

I trained for months, joined a women's running group, and took part in my first 10K. I even got my 8-year-old son involved in parkrun, and we now enjoy running together. It became more than training — it was about community, friendship, and purpose.

The charity does amazing work, and I would love to be more involved in the future. If you've ever thought about taking on a challenge to support it — whether running, walking or something else — please do. It's such a rewarding feeling, and I'm already looking forward to my next one!

## **Can you recommend a book, film or TV show you've seen or read recently?**

One of my favourite books of all time is *The Little Prince* — it's a beautiful reminder for children and adults alike to see with the heart, not just the eyes. A recent TV mini-series I would really recommend is *Adolescence* – a touching show about the pressures young people face today, from bullying to social media. I am drawn to anything that makes you reflect, feel something real, and connect with others.



For useful contacts, please visit [www.ghc.nhs.uk/useful-contacts](http://www.ghc.nhs.uk/useful-contacts)