



# With you, for you

MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2025

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# Welcome

Two contrasting celebrations at our Community Hospitals feature in this edition, as Stroud commemorated 150 years – having moved to its current site in 1875 – while the Forest of Dean Community Hospital marked its first birthday.

Staying in the Forest for a moment, we take a look at a new approach to support people with autism or learning disabilities to attend outpatient appointments.

Volunteers Week in June gave us an opportunity to highlight the invaluable contribution they make within our Trust, and we've picked four volunteers to showcase in this edition.

There's also news on Cirencester Hospital Radio, our long-running annual Big Health Day and a look at the work of our Governors. Finally, our AGM is on September 11 from 5pm – check the website to book a place if you'd like to attend or ask a question.



## 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**



## We've been recredited as a Veteran Aware Trust.

**This is in recognition of our continued work in demonstrating the NHS's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.**

The reaccreditation acknowledges the Trust's commitment to a number of key pledges, including:

- Ensuring that the armed forces community is never disadvantaged compared to other patients, in line with the NHS's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Training relevant staff on veteran-specific culture or needs.
- Making veterans, reservists and service families aware of appropriate charities or NHS services beneficial to them, such as mental health services or support with financial and/or benefit claims.
- Supporting the armed forces as an employer.

Find out more about our work to support veterans on our website.

Visit: **[www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/veterans/](http://www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/veterans/)**



# Developing a Vocational Rehabilitation Service



**Our Trust and Rosebank Primary Care Network (PCN) in Gloucester has established a pioneering service to help people get back to work following illness. The Vocational Rehabilitation Service helps people who have been off work as long-term sick and gives them the tools, skills and adjustments needed to return to the workplace.**

Rosebank Primary Care Network Business Manager Cheryl Lawrence explains:

**“We are proud to be the first in the country to offer this service to working-age adults. The idea stemmed from a significant rise in sick note requests following the pandemic. We wanted to explore innovative ways to manage this increasing demand while ensuring our patients receive the right support to help them return to work.”**

Rosebank hoped to enable their patients to reap the benefits of Vocational Rehabilitation by supporting patients to remain in or regain permanent employment, to overcome barriers, and to provide advice on reasonable adjustments or suitable duties as part of an individualised treatment plan.

The aim was also to improve long-term physical and mental health support, enable access to wider support services and, for those with complex vocational needs, to find a way to support GPs to help with this.

Together the team established a referral and exclusion criteria and a structured approach to determine the level of treatment each person required.



# Celebrating 150 YEARS of STROUD GENERAL HOSPITAL



Celebrations are taking place for the 150th anniversary of Stroud General Hospital. Stroud Hospitals League of Friends are working with us to hold a series of events and activities, including a celebratory service which took place on 6 July at the nearby Holy Trinity Church.

The community hospital was moved to the current site in 1875 and provides Stroud and the surrounding area with inpatient and outpatient services, a minor injuries and illness unit, x-ray and ultrasound services, occupational therapy and physiotherapy support.

The local community, colleagues across the site, patients and carers are all being encouraged to get involved in the celebrations as Matron of Stroud and Vale Community Hospitals Liz Lovett explains:



**“We started off with the church service, then we’re looking at a few different activities over the anniversary year, such as a picture competition with local schools, a cake competition, taking some photographs of colleagues and teams within the hospitals and celebrating the history behind the 150 years of the Hospital.**”



**“We want to include our local community and to really celebrate the great things we are doing and our links with the League of Friends and our partner organisations across the county. I love working here and am really proud of my colleagues and the incredible service we provide to Stroud and our local community. This is an opportunity to thank everyone who has made Stroud General Hospital what it is today.”**

Margaret Greaves from the League of Friends said: **“It’s really exciting to mark the 150th anniversary of Stroud General Hospital on this present site. The League of Friends has been in place since 1948 and we know that the hospital is so much in the hearts of the local community. We hope to continue to work together to build upon that for 150 more years.”**



# Celebrating one year of the Forest of Dean community hospital



In June, we marked the first anniversary following the opening of the Forest of Dean Community Hospital.

Matron Kate Harper invited our Chair Graham Russell to meet the wider team and reflect on the past twelve months. Kate said: **"It's all been really successful, we've got lots of different departments**

**working really well together. We're able to give really good quality patient care because we've got single rooms and facilities and we're really proud of it.**

**"I love the teams, I like that we can give the patients the care that they deserve and I like the fact that we're a part of the community."**

# VOLUNTEERS WEEK

**Volunteers Week was an opportunity for us to celebrate the work of our Trust volunteers and encourage more people to get involved in volunteering with our Trust.**



**Mike Smart is a ward volunteer on Coln Ward, at Cirencester Hospital.** He said:

"The reason I started to volunteer was a very personal one.

The ward looked

after my father during the final weeks of his life. Everyone was so kind, caring and compassionate. I thought this is an environment I can devote my time to. I like variety so my time can vary from helping on the nursing station, answering phones, making beds, taking requests for the hospital radio, serving lunches and sitting and chatting with the patients. Volunteering to me is a very satisfying and enriching experience where I am recognised, appreciated, feel part of a team and add value whilst I am there. **If this appeals, and you have any spare time, then I would recommend volunteering to you."**



**John Smith is a Volunteer Driver with the Children's Community Nursing Team.**

He said: "I am retired with time on my hands. I can't justify

playing golf all the time and take pleasure in helping out within the community I've grown up in. In addition it's fair to say that the NHS have saved my life at least twice

– and contrary to all the bad news stories about the NHS on the news they by far for the most part provide a fantastic and caring service for most of us whether we need it now or maybe in the future."



**Alison Hennessey volunteers at the Forest of Dean Community Hospital.**

She said: "I specialise in singing with the patients, doing basic crafting (card making,

colouring in etc), playing bingo or even just informal chatting and keeping people company. Sometimes life can leave you looking inward all of the time, especially after retirement, which can be detrimental to your mental health. **Looking outward and helping other people helps you to feel better."**



**Penny Wright volunteers at North Cotswold Hospital.**

She said: "My role is to deliver mid-morning drinks to patients on the ward. I also deliver

newspapers if the staff haven't had the time to. I volunteer because I live in a most beautiful part of the Cotswolds, I am retired and I like to feel part of the community of this lovely town. I also enjoy talking to people, and hearing of their amazing life experiences."

If you would like to volunteer with us, visit **[www.ghc.nhs.uk/volunteer](http://www.ghc.nhs.uk/volunteer)**

# T-Level Students join Cirencester Hospital Radio

Young people in Gloucestershire are being offered the opportunity to gain valuable real-life experience when they participate in T-Level placements at our hospitals.

Cirencester Hospital Radio, a voluntary organisation providing a 24/7 radio service for patients, is currently hosting Media and Production T-Level students Robert and Evie.

Station Chairman Peter Beach explains:

**“The students are T-level students from Cirencester College across the road. They will be coming over the next 18 months and do around 315 hours of work experience.**

**“On a Monday they do a live broadcast so they prepare a programme and then they’ll present, between themselves – one will do the controls, one will talk, and then they’ll swap over every week. Then what we tend**



**to do on a Friday, I have an MS Teams meeting with them for convenience and then we plan what they’re going to do and I also give them recordings to edit. So the guys who present during the week actually record their programmes, so the students then take away, as well as preparing their programme, they’ll take away some files and edit them.**

**“They get loaded onto our playout system as well. Over the course of the next 18 months, I’ll find a lot for them to do. Of course it’s not just presenting, there’s a lot of stuff that goes on in the background; there’s loading up the playout system, there’s work editing the website, preparing and editing the recordings and there’s technical work if they want to get involved in that as well.”**

## Annual General Meeting

**Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) is taking place from 5 to 6.30pm on Thursday 11 September, via Microsoft Teams.**

The AGM is your opportunity to hear about our achievements over the past year and the challenges we have faced and learn about our future plans and priorities, and how we are performing financially. If you would like to join us for our AGM, please email [anna.hilditch@ghc.nhs.uk](mailto:anna.hilditch@ghc.nhs.uk).

## School Immunisations

**The School Immunisations Service achieved the highest uptake for flu vaccines in the south west during the 2024/25 academic year.**

For primary schools the uptake was 73% against a regional figure of 63% and for secondary schools it was 65%, against a regional uptake of 53%. The service also achieved significantly higher uptake than the national average for HPV vaccines given in Year 8, MenACWY given in year 9 and Td/IPC given in Year 9.



# PULMONARY ACCREDITAION



**The Pulmonary Rehabilitation (PR) Service has been congratulated on achieving the Royal College of Physicians Pulmonary Rehabilitation Services Accreditation.**

Pulmonary rehabilitation is a structured programme designed to improve the quality of life for individuals with chronic lung

diseases through education, exercise, and support.

This national accreditation provides independent and impartial recognition that the service demonstrates high levels of quality against established standards. Accreditation is recommended in the NHS England commissioning standards and supported by the Care Quality Commission. The accreditation assessors commented that the service has demonstrated 'excellent achievement' in several areas.

This accreditation means that patients can feel confident in their pulmonary rehabilitation service and be assured of receiving high quality, safe consistent care.



# Support for your mental health

## Looking after yourself

There are little things you can do to look after your mental health. Just a few simple changes can help improve your mood and cope with life's challenges.

With the Every Mind Matters online platform, you can get free expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

## Talking therapy

If you feel stressed, anxious or depressed, you might struggle with work, life or relationships. NHS Talking Therapies can help. Search [nhs.uk/talk](https://www.nhs.uk/talk)

Your GP can refer you to your local NHS Talking Therapies service - or you can refer yourself online.

## Crisis

If you are experiencing significant emotional or mental distress, call NHS 111 and select the mental health option.

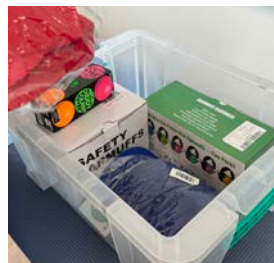
The service offers 24/7 advice and support if you are:

- Experiencing worry, anxiety or fear that you can't control
- Hearing voices and seeing things that others can't
- Considering harming yourself
- Find yourself withdrawing from your friends or family.

If someone's life is at risk, call 999 or go to A&E.



## New Forest of Dean Outpatients Department Sensory Support Pack



The Outpatient Department team at the Forest of Dean Community Hospital has come up with a practical way to help people with learning disabilities or autism coming to appointments. The idea came about following the Oliver McGowan Training the team received, which is named after Oliver McGowan, a young man with autism who died in 2016.

Senior Outpatient Nurse Denise (Den) Edmunds said: **"We learned a heck of a lot on the Oliver McGowan Training. it was a really interesting day and we decided we wanted to do something to make a difference."**

In the kit there are special protective earmuffs for adults and children that may help with noise such as radios, TVs in the waiting room or people talking.

Den adds: **"Even walking through the MIIU where there may be children making a lot of noise because they are upset, the earmuffs can help ensure that patients with sensory needs are not triggered by these distractions when coming to appointments."**

The team also offer caps to help protect them from the harsh lighting when they walk through the corridors. They also offer simple communication cards to help the patient to answer questions when they feel overwhelmed and unable to speak.

The cards have simple images to help them say yes or no. They also have squidgy balls that they can squeeze to help with anxious feelings. All items are for single use, so there are no infection control issues, and the patients can take the items away with them. The team hope the support pack will make a difference – and not just in the Forest of Dean.

As Den explains: **"We hope that by us taking this simple first step, these sensory support packs will be rolled out county-wide. We will soon be adding this offer to our website, and to patient letters, to make people aware, so any patient, parent or carer can look on the website and find out we have the kits – as well as through posters on display at reception."**

# THE BIG HEALTH EVENT



**Our celebrated Big Health Day was held on Friday 13 June, attracting the usual large crowd - 1,600 people this year - as well as bright sunshine.**

Now in its 17th year, the event aims to help people with a disability, mental health condition or sensory loss to stay active and healthy. It was highly commended in the NHS Southwest Integrated Personalised Care Awards earlier this year.

We were delighted to welcome Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire Dr Shanta Nair, who toured the site speaking with

visitors, participants and the small army of volunteers, brilliantly organised as usual by Hartpurty College.

This event is a collaborative effort between statutory and voluntary sectors and relies on the support of a wide range of partners - Inclusion Gloucestershire, Active Gloucestershire, Active Impact, Gloucestershire County Council, Jamats, Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Scrubditch Care Farm, Music Workz, Cotwolds Crusaders Boccia and many others.



# Governor Round Up



**Our Council of Governors is a vital link between the Trust and our communities. NHS Foundation Trusts 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. You can read more about our Council of Governors in the 'Who We Are' section on our website.

## New Governors Elected

Two new Governors joined our Council of Governors from 1 July 2025. We would like to welcome:

- David Hindle – Public Governor (Cotswolds)
- Caroline Goldstein – Staff Governor (Medical, Dental and Nursing)

Information about all of our Governors, the constituencies they represent and how you can contact your Governor, can be found on our website.

## Joint Working and Refreshing Our Trust Strategy

Our Council of Governors meets 6 times a year and our formal meetings are open for the public to observe (see our website for further details and future dates).

On 9th July 2025, we held a joint Board/ Council of Governors session where we considered the Trust Strategy in the context of the recently published NHS 10-year plan.

A number of engagement sessions are taking place across the Trust looking at the refresh of our overarching Trust Strategy, and Governors have had the opportunity to feed into this process and to help shape thinking.



## Out and About

Our Governors attend events around the county, and are able to speak to Trust Members, patients and the public about the Trust, our services and Trust membership.



Our Governors hosted a Membership stand at our recent Big Health Day and got to meet colleagues from organisations across Gloucestershire.

Our Governors have the opportunity to attend regular visits to our main hospital sites. Visits have taken place to North Cotswold Hospital, Tewkesbury Community Hospital, Stroud General Hospital and Charlton Lane Hospital.

These visits offer Governors the opportunity to see our sites, speak to colleagues and patients, and to gain a better understanding of the services we provide. We will soon be setting up “pop-up” stands for our Governors at the Hospitals.....so if you are visiting us for an appointment or to see a family member, keep an eye out for us.



**Monday 9 – Sunday 15 June was Diabetes Week. The focus of this year’s campaign was on the health checks people need when they have diabetes – highlighting why they’re so important and some of the reasons people might not be getting them.**

Health checks are tests to check your average blood sugar levels and how well your heart and kidneys are working, as well as check-ups on your eyes and feet. They can help spot signs of any changes early on, so you can get all the help and support you need.

This Diabetes Week our Community Diabetes team partnered up with Xyla (which runs a type 2 diabetes prevention programme), and Healthy Lifestyles Gloucestershire, and were out and about in Gloucestershire on the information bus, providing risk scores, blood glucose testing, and generally raising awareness of type 2 diabetes.

## National Healthcare Estates & Facilities Day

On Wednesday 18 June we celebrated National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day – an annual event which recognises the critical work of all our Estates and Facilities (E&F) colleagues, and their role in our healthcare services.

Members of the Estates and Facilities Senior Leadership team were out and about visiting colleagues throughout the day, to say a huge 'thank you' for all their amazing work, which keeps our community hospitals, inpatient units, outpatient services and corporate sites running day in, day out, 365 days a year.

Due to popular demand, the National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day photography competition was back, and we received some strong entries from many of our teams across the Trust. These included action shots, team photos, bus shelter snaps and a great party atmosphere captured in the sunshine at Stroud Hospital. At the time of writing, the winners are yet to be announced.

Among the entries was this fabulous photograph taken by our E&F colleagues at Tewkesbury Hospital, who recreated the iconic cover of The Beatles' Abbey Road album.



## HEART FAILURE AWARENESS WEEK



**May 5-11 was Heart Failure Awareness Week. Held every year in May, it's an opportunity to shine a light on heart failure and raise awareness about our fantastic Heart Failure Service.**

Led by the British Society for Heart Failure, the campaign aims to raise awareness of the importance of recognising heart failure symptoms early, getting an accurate diagnosis and receiving optimal treatment.

This year's theme, 'Heart Failure Doesn't Stop Us', aimed to spread hope and break the stigma around heart failure.

To help spread this important message and raise awareness, members of our Heart Failure team were out and about offering advice and information about heart failure and how to spot the common 'F' word symptoms of heart failure: 'Fighting for breath', 'Fluid retention' and 'Fatigue'.



# Win two tickets to 'The Talented Mr Ripley' at Everyman Theatre



For this issue's competition, Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham has kindly donated two tickets for **the 6th September** performance of 'The Talented Mr Ripley'.

The cast is led by Ed McVey – one of the stars of the hit Netflix show 'The Crown' – as Tom Ripley, supported by 'EastEnders' regular and 'Strictly Come Dancing' finalist Maisie Smith as Marge.

This new stage adaptation brings Patricia Highsmith's iconic psychological thriller, which inspired the acclaimed movie and Netflix series of the same name, to life.

**For a chance to win this fabulous prize, 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 of Friday 29th August 2025.**

## Mediterranean medleys recipe

PREP  
15  
MINUTES

COOK  
25  
MINUTES

SERVES  
4  
PEOPLE



### Ingredients

- 1 pepper, any colour, deseeded and chopped
- 1 courgette, sliced
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 8 cherry tomatoes, halved
- teaspoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, chopped (dried is also fine)
- 8 slices wholemeal bread
- 3 tablespoons reduced-fat hummus
- 100g skinless and boneless roast chicken breasts, sliced
- 2 handfuls mixed salad leaves
- 1 pinch ground black pepper

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200C (180C fan, gas mark 6).
2. Put the vegetables on to a baking sheet and sprinkle with the oil. Add the rosemary and season with black pepper. Roast for 20 to 25 minutes, until the vegetables are tender.

Roast the vegetables in advance, then cool them. Keep them in a covered dish in the fridge for up to 3 days, ready to use for the sandwiches.

3. To make the sandwiches, spread each slice of bread with hummus, then top 4 slices with the chicken. Share the cooled vegetables between them and add some salad leaves. Top with the remaining slices of bread, cut in half and serve.

**Information:** For a vegetarian version, add a little reduced-fat grated cheese instead of chicken, or simply use some extra hummus.

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

# Final word



**Lead Spiritual Practitioner Christopher Kinch talks about the multi-faith service the Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy Service provides for patients and colleagues across the county.**

## What does your role at the Trust involve?

I served as a chaplain in the British Army for 15 years and my last day in uniform and the battalion was 24 October 2024.

Although I was in ordained ministry for almost 20 years as a priest in the Church of England, I was then received into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church when I left the army. So I'm currently serving in a lay capacity. I work alongside Bill Wright who is a Buddhist and Alison Evans, who is a Baptist minister and part-time chaplain at Stroud General Hospital and we lead a team of volunteers who regularly visit the wards at our community hospitals.

We make no assumptions about personal beliefs or religious beliefs but seek to understand the person as a whole. We offer a service which is available to everyone – whether you have a faith, or not. Trust Chaplains are here to listen and support you whatever your beliefs, or religious practices. Any member of the medical staff, a patient, or a carer can make a referral to the Spiritual Care Team. We can also request faith representatives and belief groups to respond.

## What support do you offer?

When facing mental or physical health challenges, we can often find ourselves asking some perplexing questions – as we search for the answers to these profound questions, we may become aware of the spiritual aspects of our life. Spirituality recognises that the journey of 'making sense' of our experiences embraces heart, soul and spirit, as well as mind and body.

We can accompany you on this journey, or simply provide an opportunity to discuss how the experience of illness impacts upon your life. We're here to listen and to support patients, carers, families and colleagues, whatever your beliefs or religious practices, in a sensitive, open and non-judgmental manner. We will always treat what you say to us with the utmost respect and care.

I'm primarily based within each of the trust's adult mental health and learning disability inpatient services. So, I regularly visit each of the wards at Wotton Lawn Hospital and Charlton Lane Hospital, as well as the trust's inpatient recovery units Honeybourne and Laurel House. I also have a regular visit to the staff at Berkeley House.

I've also recently become one of the Trust's Armed Forces Veterans Champions.

## What do you love about your work?

I particularly enjoy those moments with patients when the gradual building of a rapport leads to a significant or profound 1:1 conversation with them. Every person's story is unique and it's always a real privilege to be able to offer a listening ear to someone.

## How can patients, visitors and colleagues contact you for support?

We're available Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm and to request support, phone us on:

**0300 421 4787** or

email: [spiritual.care@ghc.nhs.uk](mailto:spiritual.care@ghc.nhs.uk)



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