

ESNEFTlife

Issue 11: Winter/Spring 2024

Taking children's care to the next level

Major milestone for Ipswich Hospital:
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Celebrating your NHS



AI 'reads' x-rays



Hospital care on the coast



Going above and beyond

Celebrating innovation at ESNEFT and the NHS at 75



New photos showcase how we use technology in patient care

Embracing innovation has been an important part of the NHS's history. At ESNEFT, using new technology is a big part of caring for our patients too.

You can see some of the ways we're innovating at our Trust in this series of new images. They were taken to mark the 75th anniversary of the NHS last year.

The 12 photos, taken by local photographer Warren Page, are up at both Colchester and Ipswich hospitals. At Colchester they're near the x-ray department, opposite the Dementia Care tree mural. At Ipswich Hospital they're along the main corridor opposite the Education Centre.



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New nursing role to support seriously ill children

Families of children with complex health conditions can now receive extra support after Ipswich Hospital welcomed its first Roald Dahl nurse specialist.

Lucy Broom took up the new role at the start of this year. It has been created by Roald Dahl's Marvellous Children's Charity working in partnership with ESNEFT.

Lucy will be responsible for supporting around 80 children and young people and their families in east Suffolk with complex, lifelong conditions who often need to see multiple medical professionals. She will help to coordinate their care while acting as a single point of contact for their families.



Lucy, pictured, said: "It's a really exciting, holistic role. The families of children with complex illnesses are often under a lot of pressure, so it's great that we will be able to offer them one central person who can coordinate care on their behalf."

"I hope to make a difference by taking care of the little things which then add up to become the big things."



Danilo Narciso with mum Euridice and (left to right) Mandy Jordan, Lauren Filby, Kerry Richer and Abbie Cracknell (kneeling).

Visit Colchester & Ipswich Hospitals Charity's website for more information about The Children's Appeal.

Children's department big build takes shape at Ipswich

Second phase of major redevelopment opens

The next phase of a multi-million pound redevelopment of the children's department at Ipswich Hospital is now open.

The work has seen an extension built, along with a new treatment room, dedicated two-bed high dependency bay and calming and relaxing sanctuary room for young patients experiencing mental health difficulties.

Parts of the new inpatient area, including some of the new ensuite rooms, have also opened.

The third and final phase of the project began at the start of January. It will include the new ward entrance, further inpatient rooms, a school room, children's assessment unit and refurbished outdoor play area. All the work will be complete by the summer.

The project is being paid for by ESNEFT and funds raised through Colchester & Ipswich Hospitals Charity's Children's Appeal.

Dr Lauren Filby, clinical lead for paediatrics at Ipswich Hospital, said: "We are thrilled that

the second phase of this fantastic project is now open. It has created a bright and welcoming space which will further improve the experience our young patients and their families and carers have when they come to Ipswich Hospital."

Mandy Jordan, ESNEFT's associate director for charities and voluntary services, said:

"We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has supported The Children's Appeal so far."

"Their generosity is helping to transform the department into a modern, child-friendly environment which matches the high standards of care our teams provide."

"We are still keen to hear from anyone who would like to support our appeal and would welcome their help with funding those all-important extras to complete the transformation, including the indoor and outdoor play spaces and sensory equipment."



I was at my fittest when I was diagnosed with breast cancer at 29

Jessamy is now part of three research studies to help others

For 29-year-old Jessamy Pearce, it was a TV show that reminded her to check her breasts.

Jessamy was seen at Ipswich Hospital within two weeks after she found a lump, which was confirmed to be cancerous. Treatment began and included chemotherapy and surgery, as well as immunotherapy and radiotherapy.

Jessamy, who works in administration for a solicitor, said:

"I was watching Firefly Lane on Netflix and one of the characters had breast cancer. It made me think I should check and that's when I felt something in my own breast."

"At the hospital I had a mammogram and a biopsy taken and was then told it was cancer. It's a strange experience – I remember suddenly seeing so many people and being given so much information."



Jessamy with dad Louis and husband Sam who both shaved their heads in support.

Jessamy, who is married to Sam, was happy to have all the treatment available. She also signed up not to just one, but three cancer research studies at the hospital.

"I was at my fittest and healthiest when I found out, but I agreed to everything to treat it. I was more than happy to say yes to the research studies." She added "I thought if I can help someone else in the future then that's the right decision to make."

Jessamy, who has since turned 30, is now a research participant on the Personalised Breast Cancer Programme, the Vinehealth app study and ICI Genetics.

Senior clinical research practitioner Paul Ridley is part of the ESNEFT cancer research team. He said: "Research is vital to improve patient outcomes. Participation can benefit the individual and, as Jessamy has said, help someone else in the future."

Anyone with a concern about their breasts should speak to their GP. Symptoms of breast cancer include finding a lump, discharge from either nipple, a change in the size or shape of one or both breasts, swelling in an armpit, dimpled skin, a rash, or a change in the appearance of your nipple, such as becoming sunken into your breast.



Thyroid cancer study investigates life-changing option

A study looking into a life-changing option for thyroid cancer is up and running at ESNEFT.

The current treatment is complete removal of the thyroid gland, but the HoT Trial (Hemi or Total Thyroidectomy in low-risk thyroid cancer) is looking at whether a partial removal is as effective.

Billy Wong is a head and neck/thyroid consultant surgeon at ESNEFT and principal investigator for the study.

He said: "Having your entire thyroid gland removed is a life-

changing procedure and involves a considerable number of implications. Patients will need to take hormone therapy for the rest of their lives and may also need to take vitamin D and calcium tablets. It can have an impact on the structures around the thyroid gland such as the nerves to the voice box.

"A partial removal essentially halves if not eliminates these risks.

"There is currently no consensus on what constitutes the best treatment for low-risk thyroid cancer. We hope that this study would provide the definitive evidence for the future in thyroid cancers."

I had a stroke during my hospital research appointment

Grandmother, 59, was 'in the right place at the right time'

When Tracey Holland went for a routine appointment at Ipswich Hospital's Research Unit, she didn't realise she was having a stroke.

At the time, she apologised for having a twitchy eye. The research nurses realised immediately Tracey might be showing signs of a stroke. The 59-year-old said:

My eye was a bit funny that morning and by the time I got to hospital I couldn't see out of it very well. I happened to mention it. The nurses Helen and Debbie said they didn't think something was quite right."

Tracey, who lives in Hadleigh with her husband Paul, was checked over by Dr Sanjeev Sharma. He said her blood pressure was high and she needed to see the stroke team.

The right side of her face had also started to droop. Dr Sharma spoke to the on-call stroke consultant and Tracey was advised to go to A&E for urgent review by the stroke team. She was escorted there by Helen, a member of the research team.

After a CT scan she was kept in Ipswich Hospital overnight and told she'd had a mini stroke.

The grandmother-of-five is a research participant on one of the studies at ESNEFT, which runs Ipswich Hospital.



Tracey with husband Paul. (Right) Helen Atkins, Debbie Simmonds and Dr Sanjeev Sharma

She added: "I was in the right place at the right time. Helen and Debbie just seemed to know. They were amazing. I can't thank them enough and they came up to the ward to check on me. If I'd been at home, I think I'd have carried on ignoring it."

Tracey is now taking medication while waiting for further follow-up appointments.

Endocrinology consultant Dr Sharma said: "Irrespective of the reason patients are attending hospital, they should never hesitate to inform the healthcare team about their ongoing and new symptoms."

"We hope to see Tracey much better in her subsequent research appointments and thank her for her gratitude."

The main symptoms of stroke can be remembered with the word FAST:

Spot the signs of a stroke



Face

the face may have dropped on one side, the person may not be able to smile, or their mouth or eye may have drooped.



Arms

the person may not be able to lift both arms and keep them there because of weakness or numbness in one arm.



Speech

their speech may be slurred or garbled, or the person may not be able to talk at all despite appearing to be awake. They may also have problems understanding what you're saying to them.



Time

it's time to dial 999 immediately if you notice any of these signs or symptoms.

Faster access to diagnostic tests for patients on north Essex coast

Final service opens at Clacton's diagnostic centre

People living in north Essex are now able to access a full range of fast, convenient health tests closer to home after the final service opened at Clacton Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC).

Endoscopy patients have been welcomed for the first time, marking the full opening of the centre.

It means people in the area can get quicker access to diagnostic tests including CT and MRI scans, x-rays, ultrasounds, blood tests and cardio-respiratory checks, thanks to £25million of NHS investment.

Operational manager Steve Burnett said: "The feedback we've received so far has been amazing. Patients tell us they really appreciate the fact they no longer need to travel to Colchester,



while our staff thoroughly enjoy working in bright, modern surroundings with state-of-the-art equipment.

The CDC is also bringing benefits across the whole of ESNEFT, as it gives us the flexibility to offer appointments to patients from Ipswich and east Suffolk where necessary, in turn reducing waiting times for these important diagnostic tests."

The CDC project was made possible by a partnership of ESNEFT, GP Primary Choice Ltd, Community Voluntary Service Tending, Tending District Council, Essex County Council, NHSPS and Alliance Medical.

Best foot forward for podiatry



A new podiatry department has been opened at Clacton Hospital.

Based at entrance three, the new facility has five clinic rooms, and a more spacious and much improved patient waiting room.

It is vastly different from the department's former home, across the road in Reckitt Lodge, which proved a challenging environment for staff and patients for several years. Penny Cason, Director of Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) at ESNEFT, said:

This department really is old meets new. It offers care closer to home which is essential, but also incredible, spacious, well-ventilated rooms and a relaxing waiting room with lovely skylights."

New 'bus stop' encourages patients to socialise on ward

All aboard! This new bus stop feature is for our patients on St Osyth Priory Ward at Clacton Hospital.

It's a seating area to encourage patients to meet and socialise.

It's part of a whole ward refurbishment to improve the environment for patients, including making it dementia-friendly.

The bus stop idea was courtesy of colleagues from Peldon Ward at Colchester Hospital where there's been a 'bus stop' for some time.



Surgeons perform more operations using latest robotic technology

We offer robotic surgery to some patients having colorectal, gynaecological and urological procedures, as well as knee replacements, across Colchester and Ipswich hospitals.

The multi-specialty robotic surgery programme at ESNEFT started three years ago and has now expanded to four robots. Here are the stories of some patients who have benefited from this major advance in medical technology.

Endometriosis patients see faster recoveries

Patients Amy Hook and Abbie Smith have both had robotic gynaecological surgery at Colchester Hospital. They've shared their stories and how their recovery went following their operations by ESNEFT consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist Barry Whitlow.

Amy Hook, 33, lives in Manningtree and works at a law firm. She had a hysterectomy to remove her uterus having experienced pain for several years due to endometriosis and adenomyosis.

She said: "I've suffered years of crippling pain and heavy periods since I was a teenager. I quickly thought what I was experiencing couldn't be normal and by 23 I was diagnosed with stage three to four endometriosis and adenomyosis.

Having a hysterectomy has been on the cards for a while now and I knew it was an inevitable stage I'd get to.

"I hit 30 and having had seven years of hell since my diagnosis I spoke to my consultant Barry Whitlow and he agreed to put me on the list. We talked through the operation, and he said he'd use robotic surgery. I was fine with that.



"I was in hospital for one night afterwards and felt I'd healed amazingly well. I was tender the second week but in a lot less pain than the other procedures I've had done. I'd definitely recommend robot surgery to someone else if they have a choice."

Abbie Smith, 35, is a nursery manager from Ipswich. She has endometriosis and had robotic surgery to remove tissue growth.

She said: "It's an enormous relief to have had the procedure, especially after years and years of no one believing me when I talked about the severe pain. Ever since I started my periods at 11 I realised they were different to my friends.

"I missed quite a lot of school and when I went to university to take childhood studies, the issue escalated. I'd have flare ups and I wouldn't be able to move.

"I researched the issue myself, but it wasn't until I spoke to a nurse during a smear test that I was

finally believed and referred to Colchester Hospital.

"Barry Whitlow changed my life as he understood and believed me. I was diagnosed with stage four endometriosis.

I was excited to have robot surgery and the recovery has been great. I can get back to living my life."

Mr Whitlow said: "It's great to know Amy and Abbie have felt the positive benefits of robotic surgery. Our data shows it's quicker with robots and patients stay in hospital for less time. Not only is that positive for them to be able to recover at home, it also helps us be able to treat other patients quicker too."

Allan feels 'great' after prostate cancer surgery

Patients diagnosed with prostate cancer are now able to have robotic surgery at Colchester Hospital as part of their treatment.



After Allan Brimfield, 68, was diagnosed, he had hormone therapy and radiotherapy. He then opted to have the tumour on his prostate removed.

The ex-engineer and father-of-three said his consultant Mr Rajiv Pillai explained the procedure and that he would use a robot to operate. Allan, who lives in St Osyth, said:

I was fascinated by it all. I had no worries about a robot being used – everyone is trained and I thought what a brilliant piece of kit to have used on me.



"I had a hernia and he corrected that at the same time too. I cannot praise the team enough.

"I wasn't expecting such a quick recovery and am so pleased. I've been doing my exercises and taking my Westie dog for walks. I feel great."

All Colchester colorectal patients to have robotic surgery

All patients having colorectal surgery at Colchester Hospital will now benefit from their operation being performed robotically.

Colchester Hospital has become the first hospital site in Europe to reach this landmark with all six colorectal surgeons completing their training.

Subash Vasudevan is a general and colorectal surgeon at ESNEFT. He said:

This is a huge achievement for our robotics programme and a ground-breaking step for our patients who can benefit from the investment we've made into four Da Vinci robots we now have at the Trust."



We're so proud of Alan and the legacy he left

72-year-old helped change three people's lives after his death

The widow of an engineer who transformed the lives of at least three people by donating his organs after his death has spoken of her pride at his generosity and the legacy he left.

Alan Skippen (pictured) died at Ipswich Hospital following a bleed on the brain.

The 72-year-old passed away just four months after telling wife Jenny that he wanted to donate his organs – which Jenny says helped her family at a difficult time as they knew they were honouring his wishes.

Alan's kidneys were used to help two men in their 70s, while his liver saved the life of a 50-year-old who had been given one month to live. His corneas were also transplanted to help people with sight problems.

"Alan was a keen blood donor and was quietly proud of donating 89 units during his lifetime, so it was unsurprising when he agreed to donate his organs," said Jenny.

"That meant it was easy for us as a family when we were approached about donation as we knew it was what he wanted.



"I have since received cards from two of the recipients, which was wonderful. It somehow made it more personal to know that part of Alan had given people and their families their lives back.

// We are so proud of Alan. We have lost him and still grieve for him, but what a legacy to leave. It's the gift that keeps on giving."

Jenny and Alan were married for 50 years. They had two sons, Simon and Paul, and fostered more than 20 children during their marriage.

Jenny chose to share Alan's story during last year's national Organ Donation Week.

Heart attack survivor-turned volunteer helps others through recovery

Barry Collins knows all about cardiac recovery after having two heart attacks and a triple bypass.

Now he has found the perfect volunteer role with ESNEFT – helping patients at the cardiac rehabilitation centre in

Clacton where he himself underwent recovery classes.

The role includes charting patients' progress on walk tests, recording how far they can walk in a set time.

The 75-year-old said:

// You get to meet patients from all walks of life, and I enjoy being able to help others. It's something different for me to do."

The clinic helped Barry recover and, as a volunteer, he can now share his experiences with other patients, having been on his own journey.

Voluntary services coordinator, Lynn Rolt, said: "Barry's enthusiasm and obvious good health and lifestyle, now, should be able to resonate with new participants at the exercise classes."



Research study uses AI to 'read' chest x-rays

Technology could help diagnose lung cancer faster

Radiologists are using revolutionary AI software to help detect abnormalities on chest x-rays as part of a new research study happening at Ipswich Hospital.

When a patient is referred by their GP for a chest x-ray, consultant radiologists will assess the image to see whether there are any abnormalities such as a lesion that needs to be investigated.

As part of the LungIMPACT study, patients' x-rays will have the added benefit of being reviewed by AI software to check within minutes if it detects any issues.

Dr James Hathorn, consultant radiologist and principal investigator for the study at ESNEFT, said: "We want all AI products to be properly researched and evidenced so this is an important study for the future of healthcare.

// Hopefully using this technology will speed up the time to diagnosis and ensure patients who need treatment can have it as fast as possible."

Every x-ray will still be viewed by a consultant radiologist, with AI being used in addition to existing clinical processes for patients. Dr Hathorn added: "This is a fantastic support tool in addition to radiologists viewing x-rays. The final decision will still always be taken by the radiologist. The main point of the study is to show that AI could help prioritise which x-rays to report first, leaving the



normal ones for later and letting the investigation of potential cancers happen more quickly."

All chest x-rays taken at Ipswich Hospital which follow a GP referral will go through the LungIMPACT study. However, there is an option to opt out which patients can do by talking to the team when they come to hospital.

Frances Farnworth, assistant director of research and development at ESNEFT, said: "Real-world research in routine environments is really important, as it comes with all the necessary regulatory checks and approvals necessary in the NHS. This assures our patients their data stays within a secure environment."



Teams pull together to see more than 150 patients sooner

Patients who have been waiting the longest and those with suspected cancer were seen and/or treated sooner thanks to general surgery teams at Colchester Hospital.

The 'super weekend' enabled more than 150 patients to either complete their treatment or get their treatment/investigations underway.

They included patients who've been waiting more than 65 weeks and those referred to ESNEFT for suspected cancer.



A telephone triage clinic for cancer saw phone calls made to 110 patients alone.

Shaun Field is service manager for general surgery at Colchester Hospital. He said:

// It was a real team effort. It's heartwarming to have everyone all coming together to achieve this goal of improving and reducing our patients' waiting times and getting them seen and treated sooner."

Taking hospital-level care closer to home

Community teams help more than 3,500 patients

ESNEFT community teams have been working in partnership with the region's ambulance service to provide hospital-level care closer to home.

The Trust's Urgent Community Response Service (UCRS) in north east Essex and the Reactive Emergency Assessment Community Team (REACT) in Ipswich and east Suffolk take lower category calls from the East of England Ambulance Service (EEAST).

The teams have now helped to reach more than 1,100 patients sooner and treat them at home where appropriate. In many cases it has prevented the need for an ambulance to attend, saving an unnecessary admission into hospital.

The programme allows EEAST to send calls, including falls, minor injuries and social needs, to the UCRS and REACT teams to triage.

The patient is contacted within two hours by a team which includes doctors, nurses, paramedics, specialist nurses, physios, occupational therapists, assistant and associate practitioners, social workers, voluntary and care teams. If the patient needs continuing care this can also be supported by the service's virtual wards teams.



Benoy Michael, clinical lead

ESNEFT's Aileen Dove, who is currently musculoskeletal system (MSK) lead for North East Essex Community Services, was seconded to help implement the project. She said:

“This is making such a big difference to our patients while also helping to reduce pressures on hospital admissions and the ambulance service.”

“It means patients are getting the right treatment at the right place at the right time, with holistic care being provided in their own homes straight away rather than being taken to hospital and starting from there.”

Clare Cunnell is the REACT service lead. She said: “We can help patients more quickly than the traditional model, sending out the right people depending on the nature of the call. This could include sending a physiotherapist and nurse to someone who has fallen, for example, to complete

“We have daily multi-disciplinary meetings with a consultant to ensure the patients get access to the right care quickly.”

REACT team help sleepwalker avoid hospital stay after fall

One person the project has helped is Pam Betts. She was injured during a fall while sleepwalking. She was worried she may have to go into hospital and wouldn't be able to help her husband Ron, who has health problems.

But thanks to ESNEFT's Reactive Assessment Community Team (REACT), the normally fit and well 86-year-old was able to recover at home with extra support and daily visits.

Pam said: “They were brilliant. I can't praise them enough. I really didn't want to go to hospital. Ron has his health issues,

and I don't know what would have happened if I had had to go in. But REACT said they would send someone round as soon as possible. Everyone has been lovely.”

As well as providing medical care, the team helped the couple by setting up Meals on Wheels while Pam recovered and provided crutches to help her move around the house more easily.



CASE STUDY

Supplier chosen for new electronic patient record

Joined up system will speed up processes and make patient care safer

ESNEFT has chosen Epic as its supplier for a new electronic patient record (EPR) system.

The EPR will streamline multiple digital systems used across Ipswich Hospital, Colchester Hospital and five community hospitals in east Suffolk and north Essex into one single system.

Consultant endocrinologist Dr Damian Morris is one of the Trust's chief medical information officers for the EPR programme. He said:

“Moving to a single electronic patient record has huge benefits for patients. It means their records are kept in one digital system, so clinicians seeing them will have all the information in one place to make the right decisions about their care. It also has the potential to improve how patients have direct access to their health information.”

“It will result in big benefits for staff as they won't need to access multiple systems, and processes will be joined up across the whole Trust. It will speed up how we work behind the scenes, and we won't need to duplicate information. We also know these systems make patient care much safer.”

Electronic patient record systems are available through many different suppliers, and after a tender process ESNEFT has chosen the supplier Epic, used by many other trusts across the country.



This is part of a £190m programme of investment over a 13-year period, which includes a contribution from the National Frontline Digitisation Fund.

Damian added: “Epic is one of the leading EPR suppliers, so we know we're choosing the best option for our patients and staff.

“The process in rolling out such a large project will be complex and will need the engagement of all our staff, and patients too. It's an enormous process to build and test such a comprehensive system, as well as training our staff to use it, but we hope to go live across the Trust in 2025.”

Open day welcomes more than 350 potential new recruits

ESNEFT's recruitment team held a successful open day for more than 350 potential new recruits to staff the new Essex and Suffolk Elective Orthopaedic Centre.

Housed within the Dame Clare Marx Building at Colchester Hospital, the centre will be able to treat up to 10,000 patients a year for planned surgery. This will help to reduce waiting times and the risk of cancellations.

The Trust will welcome an additional 300 staff into a variety of roles – from consultants and anaesthetists to theatre support workers and ward clerks – when the centre opens later this year.

The event in January focused on Band 2 to Band 4 roles. Interested potential colleagues came from Colchester and neighbouring towns, and from London too, to learn more about what it would be like to work in the centre.



Help us support people living with and beyond cancer

New appeal launches to fund 'invaluable' wellbeing services

Colchester & Ipswich Hospitals Charity has launched a new appeal to raise vital funds to support people living with and beyond cancer.

The Cancer Wellbeing Fund aims to ensure that ESNEFT's Cancer Wellbeing and Information Centres, at Colchester and Ipswich hospitals, can continue to offer a full range of personalised services to patients and their families.

These include:

- Specialist information and advice
- Counselling services
- Psychological support
- Complementary therapies
- Family therapy
- Physical activity services
- Hair, skincare, and dietary advice
- Practical support
- Benefits advice and signposting

Mandy Jordan, associate director of charities and voluntary services with ESNEFT, said: "Our friendly and welcoming Cancer Wellbeing and Information Centres provide a

huge range of services – but rely on the kindness of our supporters to be able to carry on their amazing work.

// This appeal aims to help us raise all-important funds so even more people who are living with cancer can get the help, support and advice they need at the time they need it the most."

Curtis Rimmington, 31, has used the centre at Colchester Hospital since he was diagnosed with a brain tumour and epilepsy in 2018. He has received counselling, Reiki, reflexology and massage there.

Curtis said: "I see it as a safe space where you can take your mind off everything. It's peaceful and relaxing and the staff are all lovely.

"I would encourage people to support the appeal if they are able to."



Curtis with son Arthur and dog Skye

// I see it as a safe space where you can take your mind off everything. It's peaceful and relaxing and the staff are all lovely."

Cancer wellbeing fund

To find out more about the services provided by the centres, call 01206 745347 for Colchester or 01473 715748 for Ipswich.

To say thank you for the support they received, two women who have used the centres are backing the appeal.

"They picked the pieces up when my world was imploding"

Claire Beeson said the team at Ipswich Hospital's Cancer Wellbeing and Information Centre offered her a safe place and were "amazing".



Claire, 56, who lives in Ipswich with husband Warren, was rocked by her parents both being diagnosed with cancer in the same month in 2017.

She lost her mum at the end of 2020 and Claire was diagnosed with breast cancer herself while supporting her dad through his own illness before he died late in 2022.

"It was an incredibly traumatic time, but the staff at the centre were just amazing," Claire said.

// It's hard to describe what they gave me – they more than just looked after me. They picked the pieces up at a time when my world was imploding."

Claire received a variety of support, including access to exercise classes after treatment, online courses, Reiki, counselling and scar tissue therapy, which she said made a "life-changing" difference to how she both looked and felt.

The centre is "my sanctuary and safe haven"

When Jan (who has asked us not to use her surname) was diagnosed with a rare form of blood cancer in August 2022, she didn't know where to turn.



Despite receiving fantastic support from husband of 52 years John, she needed other people to talk to. She found exactly what she was looking for at the Cancer Wellbeing and Information Centre at Colchester Hospital.

The 72-year-old, who lives in Colchester, now regularly drops in for a cuppa and chat. She has also benefited from reflexology, meditation, Reiki and yoga sessions. She describes the support she has received from staff as "invaluable". Jan said:

// This appeal is so important as most people know someone who has been impacted by cancer.

"The lovely ladies were a listening ear and offered me somewhere to go and chill out if I felt anxious before an appointment. It has since become my go-to place – I look at it as my sanctuary and safe haven."

Register now for this year's fundraising events

Colchester & Ipswich Hospitals Charity has launched its fundraising events for 2024 and you can get registered today.

This year there's a new Hospital Hero Ultra Challenge where you can take part in all four of the charity's flagship events in 2024:

- **Hospital Hero Hike** (Saturday 4 May)
- **Welly Walk and Family Fun Day** (Saturday 13 July)
- **Santa Fun Run** (Sunday 1 December)
- **Colour Run** (Saturday 28 September) – an exciting new event for 2024

At each event you can support the ward or department that means the most to you.

Or if you're looking for a way to keep fit or focus on your wellbeing this year, try the new Charity Virtual Challenge. You can jog, walk, swim or cycle between 20 miles and 83 miles over a month.

Each distance represents the distance between different ESNEFT hospitals. It's free to sign up so you can fundraise for your department or a service close to your heart.

You can get signed up to any of this year's events on the charity's website: Events | Colchester & Ipswich Hospitals Charity (colchesteripswichcharity.org.uk)

State-of-the-art sensory kit helps to improve patient experience

'Magic table' equipment projects images onto any surface

People with dementia and delirium can now enjoy interactive games and stimulating scenes thanks to new state-of-the-art sensory kit at ESNEFT.

The kit is designed to increase stimulation, physical activity and social engagement. It can also help to calm the patients if they are feeling anxious.



Mandy Jordan, associate director for charities and voluntary services, said: "We are delighted this brilliant equipment is already being well-used by our older patients."

"We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who continues to support our charity by leaving us a gift in their will, fundraising on our behalf, or making a donation. Their generosity makes a huge difference to our patients, visitors and staff and we are incredibly grateful to all of them."



Patients can use their hands to move pictures, for example making ripples in a virtual fishpond, rolling a ball across a beach or choosing the answer to a quiz question.

The equipment has been funded by Colchester & Ipswich Hospitals Charity and introduced on three older people's wards at Ipswich Hospital. It has also been installed at Bluebird Lodge in Ipswich and Aldeburgh and Felixstowe community hospitals at a total cost of £55,000.

Fran Friston, ESNEFT's interim senior matron for community hospitals and older people's services, said:

These fantastic pieces of kit have been well-received by our patients.

"They have so many possible uses and can help people who are feeling anxious to relax or those with sleep problems to drift off, as well as bringing people together to take part in social activities such as quizzes.

"We are also able to upload pictures of people's dogs or their wedding day, which can be particularly useful for people with dementia by helping to bring back happy memories."

Commendation Awards for outstanding colleagues

Our Commendation Awards are our way of saying thank you to colleagues who do extraordinary things. Here we find out who has joined the Commendation hall of fame since the last edition of ESNEFT life.

Diddy Housekeeper

Anyone for a McDiddy's milkshake? Not based on any other brand of milkshake (!) these drinks are the trademark of much-loved Ipswich Hospital housekeeper Sharon Whatling, fondly known as Diddy.

Diddy goes around Stradbroke Ward each day offering the shakes to patients who need to increase their calorie and fluid intake. Ice creams and lollies are also offered as an alternative.

But it's not just the milkshakes served with a smile which make Diddy a firm favourite. She's a vital part of the ward team, described as "kind and giving and an absolute joy".

She can often be found comforting patients, especially those without visitors. She's a great mentor for new staff and Diddy will always lend a hand if a neighbouring ward needs help too. That's why Diddy received an ESNEFT Commendation Award.



Rosie Healthcare assistant

A healthcare assistant who bravely stepped in to stop a patient from being injured has been presented with an ESNEFT Commendation Award.

Rosie Beattie was on shift at Colchester Hospital when a distressed patient broke a window and tried to jump out. As the only member of staff in the immediate area, Rosie stopped the patient and kept them out of harm's way before calling for help.

Rosie, who has worked in the NHS for 34 years and is part of the Peldon Ward team, has been applauded for staying calm in a stressful situation and keeping the patient safe.

Her colleagues said the bravery Rosie showed was "incredible" and they are all very proud of her.



New, modern x-ray machine for Aldeburgh Hospital

A new modern x-ray machine is being installed at Aldeburgh Hospital thanks to the generosity of local people.

ESNEFT has begun work on the new x-ray suite using a £320,000 gift to Colchester & Ipswich Hospitals Charity from the Aldeburgh Hospital League of Friends.

The new machine will use all the latest digital technology and will be in action from the summer. It will replace the hospital's existing ageing machine. This means that people in Aldeburgh and the surrounding area will be able to keep having key diagnostic tests closer to home. Karen Lough, Director of Operations at ESNEFT, said:

This new x-ray machine will make a huge difference by giving people the chance to benefit from the very latest technology. This will help us further improve the care we are able to provide the communities we serve."

A video celebrating the start of work is available on the ESNEFT YouTube channel: [youtube.com/@esneft/videos](https://www.youtube.com/@esneft/videos)



Celebrate...

Bitesize good news stories from across ESNEFT

Young people receiving care at Ipswich Hospital can now get extra support for their wellbeing, mental health and educational needs following the launch of a new youth service.



Clinicians can refer patients aged between 11 and 19 to youth worker Rachel Senior, pictured, who will provide approximately six to eight one-to-one sessions offering help with everything from building confidence and self-esteem, to accessing education and exploring strategies to promote positive emotional wellbeing.

The launch of the service brings Ipswich Hospital in line with Colchester. Rachel set up the youth service in north Essex in 2019 and has received 472 referrals since, along with a raft of positive feedback.

Sophie Bloomfield is one of 399 apprentices we now have at ESNEFT. She's studying for a pre-registration physiotherapy apprenticeship level six – the equivalent to a degree – after joining the NHS in 2020.



Not only has Sophie, who used to be a personal trainer, embraced her role as an associate practitioner in community rehabilitation, she's passed her first year of the apprenticeship with a distinction – and made it to the University of Essex dean's list of excellence.

Sophie, 30, who works in the Colchester community team, said: "I've seen my practice expand as my confidence has grown. My knowledge

and how I can collaborate with patients is so much better than before. I want that to continue – I want to see my confidence with patients grow and my practice continue to develop."

Find out more about apprenticeship opportunities in the NHS by searching 'apprenticeships' – on the ESNEFT website (esneft.nhs.uk)

Past and present ESNEFT colleagues raised more than £2,500 in memory of much-loved orthopaedic surgeon Dame Clare Marx.

The group rode from Ipswich Hospital to the Royal College of Surgeons in London – of which Dame Clare was appointed the first female president in 2014.

The funds raised were in support of Pancreatic Cancer UK in honour of Dame Clare, who died of the illness in 2022 after working at Ipswich Hospital for 27 years.



Congratulations to ESNEFT's first group of apprentice allied health professionals (AHPs) who have graduated and are using their new skills to help patients undergoing surgery.

John Soliven and Natasha Richbell from Colchester Hospital and Harry Beaumont from Ipswich Hospital began their apprenticeships in 2020.

The apprenticeships have helped them to grow the knowledge and skills needed to develop their careers while they work, while also boosting their confidence to take on more responsibilities.

Penny Cason is ESNEFT's Director of AHPs. She said: "Our AHP apprentices have such dedication to improving patient care through their continuous learning and commitment.

"They bring fresh perspectives and innovation to our services, enhancing the quality of healthcare we provide."



ESNEFT has opened two new Butterfly Service and Information Centres.

They provide a calming environment away from the wards for the families and carers of patients who are in the last 12 months of life.



The centres also offer an opportunity to chat with one of ESNEFT's Butterfly volunteers, who support end of life patients and their families. People can also drop in for information,

non-clinical advice, and signposting from the Trust's Butterfly Service coordinators.

Both centres are open on weekdays between 9.30am and 3.30pm. People can find the Ipswich centre near the main Outpatients' Department at entrance six, and the Colchester centre close to the entrance of Gainsborough Wing.

ESNEFT has been awarded a coveted gold award in recognition of the support it offers to people serving in the armed forces, veterans and their families.

To achieve the accolade, ESNEFT needed to demonstrate it has put a range of measures in place to support servicemen and women, veterans and families.

This includes offering 10 extra paid days of annual leave for reservists and making sure its policies are supportive of reservists, veterans, Cadet Force adult volunteers and the partners of people who are currently serving.

In addition, ESNEFT runs an active Armed Forces Network. It gives members the chance to influence positive change and further improve services. It also offers clinical placements to serving personnel and runs a buddy system to support veterans who are joining the Trust.

The award was presented to the Trust as part of the Government's Defence Employer Recognition Scheme 2023.

A passionate bid to support patients who are colour blind has led to national recognition for one of our nurses.

Colchester Hospital Outpatients nurse manager Jaypee Palis has been named in a new leaders list, launched by the team behind the National BAME Health and Care Awards, to mark the 75th anniversary of the NHS.

Jaypee said: "We do not know how people who are colour blind live – it's an invisible disability.

"Wayfinding and directions in our hospitals are very much led by colour, but there is no available access for people who are colour blind.

"I want to find out what would be more beneficial or easier for them to follow, and any other ways we can support these patients in our hospitals."



Courageous nursing staff took a 10,000ft leap of faith when they jumped from a plane to raise money for new medical equipment.

The 18-strong team, based in the Critical Care Unit at Colchester Hospital, took to the skies above Wiltshire to complete tandem skydives alongside the Parachute Regiment Red Devils Free Fall team.

The group of nurses and healthcare assistants (HCAs) took inspiration for their challenge from colleague Keith Cameron, a retired paratrooper better known as 'Ned', who started working with them as a HCA during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The team raised more than £1,200. It helped to fund new equipment to support critical care patients with their often-complicated recovery process.

It also helped to pay for other facilities to ensure their relatives and friends can be comfortable and looked after too.



Can you stand on one leg like a flamingo?

Simple balance challenge can build strength in leg muscles

Standing on one leg sounds easy – but not while you're in a pool and you've broken the tibia and fibular bones in that leg.

That's what happened to Shane, pictured here trying to do the #FlamingoChallenge of standing on one leg.

Shane, 36, broke his left leg in a tobogganing accident when it became trapped under the vehicle.

He's had two operations and follow-up treatment, including physiotherapy and hydrotherapy at Ipswich Hospital to help repair his injured leg.

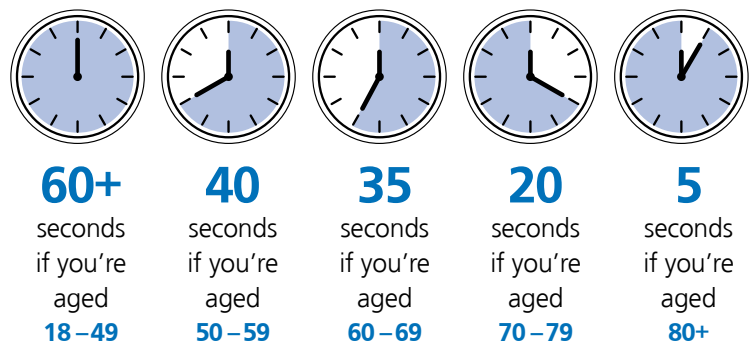
The dad, who has twin boys aged six and a son aged seven, was eager to try the challenge to see if he could achieve the target time for his age category, which is one minute.

The fibre optic engineer from Ipswich said: "Breaking two bones in my leg has had a huge impact on my life – I had to stop work and have been trying to do everything I can to help myself. Standing on my good leg was easy but much harder on my left leg. I want to keep trying to build up my muscles – so I'm keen to continue the challenge."

Being able to stand on one leg can be a general sign of your health and fitness. If you can't do the full time, just keep practising to build up.



You should be able to stand on one leg for:



Clinical specialist physiotherapist Sue Voules said:
"Balance is really important and can reduce your risk of having a fall."

"Being able to find out your flamingo age, and improve it, can also help to build strength in your muscles. If you have arthritis that creates joint swelling and then in turn this reduces muscle strength, so being able to improve this is beneficial."

"It's similar if you have a lower limb injury – it affects your balance and then creates a higher risk of you injuring yourself again."

Sue said give the challenge a go while standing on a flat stable surface so you can put your hands down if you need to.

