PRECISION treatment to blast brain tumours is now available at a cancer centre based at Newcastle’s Freeman Hospital.

Pioneering treatment to help blast life-threatening brain tumours and save hundreds of lives is now available at a cancer centre in Newcastle.

The Freeman Hospital’s Northern Centre for Cancer has now been named as a specialist provider for an advanced form of radiotherapy for the tumours.

NHS England has named the facility as one of just a few in the UK with the expertise and capability to deliver the specialist radiotherapy, known as Stereotactic Radiosurgery (SRS).

This is a highly specialised radiotherapy for patients with certain types of malignant and benign brain tumours and can only be provided by the most advanced cancer centres.

It is hoped that increasing access to the service will help to double the number of patients with brain tumours who can benefit from this advanced and highly precise form of radiotherapy, going on to save hundreds of lives.

Sir Leonard Fenwick, chief executive said: “We are truly delighted by this news which brings another innovative form of treatment to the people of the North East.

“It is very much attributable to the skill and expertise of our dedicated teams of specialists here in Newcastle, alongside the generosity of people from all over the Northern Region and beyond who have made countless donations to the local charitable funds supporting us.”

Bringing the revolutionary technique to the North East was only made possible thanks to the tremendous funding efforts led by a unique charitable collaboration between the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Charity incorporating the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation and Charlie Bear for Cancer Care, and the former Newcastle Healthcare Charity. It is through their collective efforts that NCCC was provided with funding of £1.2 million to contribute towards the purchase of the new technologies.

Sir Leonard added: “Everyone’s concerted efforts mean that patients who come to NCCC can be assured they will receive the ‘Gold Standard’ of care, having access to very best experts in their field, working with the highest specification of stereotactic radiotherapy service available today.

By delivering precisely-targeted radiation using fewer high-dose treatments than traditional therapy, SRS can help preserve healthy tissue and effectively treat the target tumour. It avoids the few sides effects associated with other treatment options such as whole brain radiation therapy, which can cause loss of memory and other cognitive function, or brain surgery – a much more invasive and thus riskier approach.

Dr Joanne Lewis, a consultant clinical oncologist who specialises in brain tumours, said: “Previously patients have had to travel great distances to Leeds or Sheffield for this type of radiotherapy.

“We often found that people were simply too ill to travel or would actually turn down this treatment option due to the logistics of the distances involved.

“I liken this treatment to ‘sterilising’ the lesions – literally stopping them in their tracks. We monitor our patients with an MRI scan after treatment, every three months, and we know from strong medical evidence, that 85% of treated lesions will remain under control one year on.”

Dr Jonathan Fielden, NHS England’s director of Specialised Services, said: “As a result of this procurement thousands more patients will benefit from this very precise and effective form of treatment.”

EDITORIAL FROM THE CHRONICLE
North East Bone-Marrow Transplant Patients will soon be able to receive all their treatment at the Freeman Hospital thanks to local charities

Bone-marrow transplant patients at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle no longer have to travel out of the region to receive some of their treatment, thanks to a collaboration between local hospital charities and the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

North East Blood cancer charity, Bright Red, has joined forces with the Freeman Hospital’s Ward 33 Haematology Fund (Newcastle Hospitals NHS Charity) to purchase two ECP machines, at a total cost of £60,000, for bone marrow transplant patients at the Freeman Hospital.

ECP (extracorporeal photopheresis) is a form of light therapy used in treating patients with ‘graft versus host’ disease (GVHD) which can be a complication of stem cell or bone marrow transplantation. GVHD can happen after a transplant from another person when particular types of white blood cells (T-cells) in the donated bone marrow or stem cells start to attack the patient’s own body cells. This happens because the donated cells (the ‘graft’) see the patient’s cells (the ‘host’) as foreign and attack them. The GVHD may affect different areas of the body, most commonly the skin, digestive system and the liver. In some cases, it can be fatal.

The ECP treatment involves removing white blood cells from the patient’s blood and exposing them to ultraviolet light in combination with a drug that kills the cells. The treated white cells are then given back to the patient resulting in suppression of their GVHD.

The treatment takes about an hour and a half to three hours and usually takes place every 2 to 4 weeks for between 6 and 12 months, depending upon individual needs. The patient rests on a reclining chair or bed throughout the treatment and is connected to the machine via a drip.

Currently around twenty patients per year who could benefit from this treatment have to travel to Rotherham which necessitates an overnight stay just at a time when their immune systems are compromised or they may be too sick to travel.

Professor Matthew Collin is Director of the Northern Centre for Bone Marrow Transplantation based at the Freeman Hospital.

He explains: “This is really good news for the region. Having the capability to treat patients locally with ECP, right here at the Freeman Hospital, will make an enormous difference to our patients, especially those who are less well. The thought of a 216-mile round trip, sometimes every week, has been enough to prevent some patients receiving this potentially life-saving treatment in the past.”

“We are so grateful to Bright Red and our own Ward 33 Fund and to all those who have made donations to these worthy charities for providing the funding needed to purchase the two machines. We are also indebted to the team at the Northern Centre for Cancer Care (NCCC) who have worked alongside NHS Commissioners for several years to make this happen.

“Our patients wanted to be able to access an ECP service locally. We have listened and responded by providing a fully comprehensive, dedicated service. This is a great example of innovation and service development led by patients and supported by the Trust and healthcare charities all working together. As a result, we are now able to provide our patients with the best possible environment in which to recover from bone marrow transplantation.”

Patient Lee Roden, 34, from Cramlington in Northumberland has been travelling to Rotherham General Hospital for ECP treatment for the past two and a half years, totalling over forty tiring round trips and overnight stays during that time. Lee had a bone marrow transplant in November 2012 to treat blood cancer but then developed GVHD which spread from his skin, to his lungs and ultimately his mouth, affecting him so badly he was unable to eat solid food.

Says Lee: “Six years ago, I was diagnosed with leukaemia and my life was turned upside down. Since then, I’ve had to have chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant and for the past two and a half years have been travelling backwards and forwards to Rotherham for ECP treatment. It’s been a difficult time for myself and for my wife Cheralyn, but I’m hugely grateful to the amazing team of people who have looked after me at the Freeman Hospital and to the ECP team at Rotherham. It’s made an unbelievable difference being able to have this treatment and I’m so glad I was fit enough to travel. When I started ECP, I had raw, open wounds in and around my mouth. I can now eat solid food again and I’m getting better and better all the time. Having this service available now at the Freeman Hospital will benefit so many more patients in our region who perhaps could not make the journey before.”

The new ECP service will be located at the Freeman Hospital’s Institute of Transplantation adjacent to the regional centre for bone marrow transplantation on Ward 33. Ward 33 provides acute and continuing care for patients undergoing investigations or treatment for blood-related disorders.

It is hoped that this new service may also be extended to treat organ transplant rejection, benefiting even more patients in the future.
CASE STUDY

Lee Roden, 34, from Cramlington in Northumberland was just 28 years old when he was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukaemia, a form of blood cancer, on 24th March 2010.

Now, six years on, Lee recalls the moment he was given the diagnosis and the huge impact his treatment has had on his life ever since.

Initially reassured that this form of cancer was very treatable, Lee was given chemotherapy in tablet form. For most patients, that would have resulted in a positive outcome as there is only a very small percentage chance of having a more serious mutation of the disease. However, unfortunately for Lee, it turns out he was in that very small percentage.

His health deteriorated over the following year and he developed a tumour under his chin. Although the tumour was successfully treated, Lee became very ill and was advised that he needed a bone marrow transplant. The worldwide bone marrow donor register ensured that Lee didn’t have to wait long for a good match and in November 2012 he received a bone marrow transplant at the Freeman Hospital’s Institute of Transplantation.

Lee describes the period immediately prior to the transplant as the most difficult time for him and his wife, Cheralyn. He had to be kept in isolation for more than two weeks, nominating just two people allowed to visit during this period and undergoing conditioning treatment to kill off his own immune system (in readiness for receiving stem cells from the donor’s bone marrow) and undergoing more intravenous chemotherapy before he was finally able to have the transplant.

Six weeks later, Lee was allowed to go home but still had to come in to the day ward every day for transfusions and further treatment, making it impossible for him to work and putting real pressure on Cheralyn.

After a couple of months, Lee started to feel better and even took part in the 2013 Bright Red Charity run to try and raise money to improve the lives of others diagnosed with blood cancer in the region. However, Lee then started to develop Graft Versus Host Disease (GVHD), a common complication of bone marrow and stem cell transplantation. At first steroid creams controlled the skin problems he was experiencing but the GVHD started to affect his lungs and ultimately, his mouth to the point where raw, open wounds in his mouth made it impossible for him to eat.

For more than two years, Lee has been travelling to Rotherham General Hospital for ECP treatment to alleviate the symptoms of GVHD. This has meant overnight trips to Rotherham every two weeks for the first nine months of treatment, every three weeks for the next three months and then every four weeks subsequently. The treatment itself involves being hooked up to a drip for two rounds of treatment on two consecutive days, which, combined with the round trip from Cramlington to Rotherham, is extremely tiring for Lee and very disruptive to family life.

However, after the first two months of treatment, the ECP began to make an “unbelievable” difference to Lee’s condition and now means he can eat and drink normally and carry on as normal a life as possible. He is working again, self-employed repairing car interiors with AutoCare UK, and is a passionate supporter and fundraiser for Bright Red.

Lee and Cheralyn are delighted to announce the birth of their first baby, a little girl, in June. All are doing well.
A GREAT GRANDDAD has become the first North East patient to take part in the world's first fully-regulated clinical trial of direct stem cell therapy for strokes.

Grandfather-of-five Leonard McCourt, 77, had the pioneering stem cell procedure as part of the trial, and was ready to go home just four days later.

The trial, called pisces, examines the effects of stem cell treatment, when given to people who have been left with brain and limb impairments following a stroke where the blood supply to the brain becomes blocked.

The hope is that the stem cell treatment will help those affected regain their independence, even with the most simple of tasks such as buttoning and unbuttoning a shirt, or feeding themselves.

The work, could, quite literally, be life-changing.

Dr Anand Dixit, a consultant physician at Newcastle’s Royal Victoria Infirmary, said: “There is currently very little research supporting useful intervention in patients once neurological disability has been established weeks to months after stroke.

“We are hopeful that we are stepping closer to being able to introduce a ground-breaking new treatment which could offer some degree of recovery of function for disabled stroke patients.”

Mr McCourt, a former printer from Newcastle’s West End, recalled what happened when he realised he had had a stroke.

He said: “I’d just got back from a trip to the coast and when I got out the car I felt a bit dizzy and wobbly. I went into the flat I lived in at the time and started to make something to eat while watching the TV. I suddenly realised I couldn’t work the remote with my left hand and I still felt a bit wobbly so decided to go to bed to see if I could sleep it off.

“When I tried to get up, I collapsed to the floor. The whole of my left side just wouldn’t work.”

Mr McCourt managed to get to his phone and dial 999. The ambulance came and luckily he had a window open so could throw the keys down to the paramedics.

He was taken immediately to the RVI where tests revealed he had suffered a stroke.

Mr McCourt stayed on the Cherryburn Unit until the end of March this year and has made a relatively good recovery.

After a few weeks of recovery, Mr McCourt was approached by Dr Dixit to see if he would be interested in taking part in the pisces trial.

Dr Dixit added: “There is very little research supporting useful intervention in patients once neurological disability has been established weeks to months after stroke.

“We are hopeful that we are stepping closer to being able to introduce a ground-breaking new treatment which could offer some degree of recovery of function for disabled stroke patients.”

Mr McCourt arrived at the RVI the night before his procedure and was taken into one of the neurosurgical theatres the next morning.

The surgery was carried out by consultant neurosurgeon, Damian Holliman, who has a special interest in surgical trials for brain injury.

He drilled a single small hole - of 1cm - into Mr McCourt’s skull to allow delivery of the cells for pre-planned areas.

Mr Holliman said: “This approach is much like keyhole surgery and so much better for the patient. Around 20 million stem cells were injected directly into the affected area of the brain using an extremely fine needle. The whole procedure itself took around five hours and went smoothly.”

EDITORIAL FROM THE CHRONICLE
Pioneering op for bike accident youngster

BRAVE Kai McGorie is to become the first child to undergo a type of pioneering surgery in the UK after a freak accident.

The youngster, 10, ruptured his pancreas after the handle bar on his bicycle ripped through his stomach when he fell off.

Now, after months of pain and several operations, Kai will make history after medics gave the green light to a form of surgery only carried out on a toddler in the US.

When he goes under the knife at Newcastle's RVI on Monday, doctors plan to remove part of his pancreas and take it across town to the Centre for Life while Kai is still in theatre.

There, they will have a six-hour window to extract islet cells which will be taken back to the hospital and put in his liver.

Islets are clusters of cells scattered throughout the pancreas, which include cells that sense sugar in the blood.

Doctors hope the move will help to control Kai's blood sugar levels and reduce the risk of him getting diabetes in the future.

Mum Emma, 32, of Lemington, said: "Nobody knew what to do until recently. Luckily he's got this professor who came up with the magic idea of this operation."

"It's only been done to one child before and Kai will be the first in this country."

"There is no other option really. It has been causing him trouble so it's got to be done. We have our fingers crossed."

Kai injured himself in the fall while racing his brother Lucas, eight, outside their home in August.

The Westerhope Primary School pupil spent the holidays in hospital, where his injuries were so severe doctors starved him for three weeks.

After his release in October, Kai has struggled with a pseudocyst - a collection of fluid in the stomach - and found himself in hospital again on Boxing Day.

Now he weighs just three-and-a-half stones and his growth has been stunted due to the damage to his organ system.

Emma said: "After the accident, we thought he had just had a bump. There wasn't that much physical damage that you could see."

"I thought initially he might have banged his head so I was concerned about that. Then he said he felt unwell and started to be sick, so I called the ambulance."

"After coming out of hospital the first time everybody was puzzled. Doctors didn't think the worst that could happen would happen, but it did."

"He's had several operations since but we're hoping this one will solve it."

Kai's struggles have attracted support from friends, family and even those at school.

His teacher is to undertake a 24-hour endurance run to raise cash for the youngster, who has pledged to give it to those that have helped him.

Kai said: "It's nice of him to do this for me. We are all hoping to raise some money to give to the ward after the operation."
MEDICs in Newcastle are leading a pioneering experimental therapy that could help reduce deaths from aggressive childhood cancers.

 Experts at the Royal Victoria Infirmary’s Great North Children’s Hospital are taking the lead in a new ‘Northern Network’ which aims to make ‘early phase’ treatments available to children diagnosed with all types of cancer.

 This new Network approach is the first of its kind in the UK and will be eagerly watched by other centres across England.

 Dr Quentin Campbell Hewson, a consultant paediatric oncologist at the GNCH, said: “Children’s cancer treatment is a relative success story. We now cure more than 80% of children with currently established treatments. However, we still see a small number of patients who cannot be cured with current therapy, and of those who are cured, many will have serious long-term side effects as a result of their curative treatment.

 Because of this, we continuously seek new therapies for children’s cancer.”

 But carrying out early phase clinical trials for new and experimental treatments is difficult.

 Dr Campbell Hewson added: “The number of children we see at GNCH with cancer is relatively small - around 120 every year. Of this number we see very small numbers of rare cancers. For example, we diagnose only two or three children each year with high risk neuroblastoma, an extremely painful tumour which affects the nervous system.

 “Neuroblastoma is a very dangerous type of cancer which can be difficult to treat. Over time we have been able to improve the success rate of treatment to around 50%, for even the most high risk tumours.

 We need to do more, yet the only way to improve this rate is to keep trying new therapies through careful and closely monitored clinical trials.”

 For many years in the RVI’s Children’s Cancer Unit, along with the research unit at Newcastle University’s Northern Institute for Cancer Research, efforts have been underway in regards to the treatment of neuroblastoma.

 The current European chemotherapy regimen was developed in Newcastle.

 Prior to setting up the new Northern Network, clinical trials at GNCH covered the North East and Cumbria region with a population of around three million.

 Dr Campbell Hewson said: “By developing a new Network to include children’s cancer centres in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen and Belfast, we have been able to increase the population we draw patients from three to 10 million.”
Pioneering British doctors save life of little ‘girl in a bubble’

By Stephen Adams

BRITISH doctors using a pioneering technique have cured a little girl kept in a ‘bubble unit’ because she had no immune system.

Kristina Vukolova was diagnosed with severe combined immunodeficiency when she was just six months old. Babies left untreated usually die before their first birthday.

Kristina was given a standard stem-cell transplant using placental-cord blood from a donor at Newcastle’s Great North Children’s Hospital. She spent three months in the sterile bubble unit because even a cold could have killed her.

Kristina was discharged from hospital but a few months later the donor cells started to attack her. Doctors asked Kristina’s mother, Jekaterina, to agree to a method that had not been tried before.

Blood stem cells and ‘mature’ white blood cells were taken from Jekaterina and transplanted into her daughter. Some of the white cells had the potential to trigger a potentially fatal disease, but the medical team removed them with antibodies and a machine using magnets. After six months in the bubble unit – which is supported by the charity The Bubble Foundation – Kristina was strong enough to leave.

Details have only just been released now she is a happy, healthy four-year-old. Her mother said: ‘I can’t thank the Newcastle team enough.’

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Dermatology

Newcastle Dermatology services were established at Cramlington Manor Walks and have developed a mobile phone app to improve patient led skin monitoring.

The app, MySkinSelfie (www.myskinselfie.com) allows patients to take standardised images of their skin problems which are dated and stored in folders. Each image can have associated notes and reminders to take photos can be set. All data is encrypted and the app can be protected by a second password in addition to the phone password.

Work is also in progress to develop the app for use by junior doctors who often have to see patients at distant hospitals and need to record images to discuss with Consultants. The project is in collaboration with Professor Patrick Olivier’s team at OpenLab, a Newcastle University research group focused on human computer interaction.
The Trust achieved status as an NHS Genomic Medicine Centre – one of 13 such centres in England - in Spring 2015 as part of Genomics England and NHS England’s 100,000 Genomes Project initiative. Throughout 2015 the focus in the North East & North Cumbria has been rare inherited disease and since Spring 2016 the project was extended to include working with cancer patients.

The North East and North Cumbria GMC (NENC GMC) is located within the International Centre for Life in Newcastle upon Tyne, and although it is based in the Northern Genetics Service it is, in reality, a rapidly developing network of clinical specialities across the entire region.

The 100,000 Genomes Project is an ambitious national initiative with a number of key work strands, including:

1. **Introduction of diagnostic whole genome sequencing (20,000 genes, 3 billion letters of DNA code per genome) in 100,000 NHS patients in whom clinicians need more precise, earlier diagnosis.** Since April 2015, over 500 families affected by rare inherited diseases have now been enrolled within our own region with plans to enrol well over 2,000 families by the end of 2017. Results from 1,200 rare disease patients who enrolled in the Pilot phase of the Project in Newcastle will have been processed locally by the end of 2016. Enrolment of cancer patients has started in earnest in sarcoma patients in Newcastle with current plans to extend to many other tumour types – including rare childhood cancers - by the end of the Project. NENC GMC is the first Centre to have developed the role of Clinical Genomic Practitioner, to provide information and specialist support to participants and their clinicians.

2. **Transformation of pathology and surgical pathways for cancer diagnostics.** We are working with surgical and pathology teams across the region to optimise collection of tumour tissue to allow both routine diagnostics and also high quality DNA extraction for whole genome sequencing.

3. **Introduce bar-coded sample tracking systems across the region.** We have successfully introduced such a system in Newcastle and are working with partner Trusts across the region to explore the possibility of bar-coded sample collection and tracking to automate the flow of diagnostic samples.

4. **Integrate informatics systems.** No small challenge. The analysis of genome data is greatly enhanced by high quality clinical data; we have invested in a digital system which can interface with a variety of different data sources – including, potentially, sources outside Newcastle Hospitals – to extract clinical data to a common electronic format.

5. **Workforce development and education.** We have appointed a small team of genomics educators who are linking with existing networks and partnerships to explore education and training needs across the NHS workforce. This is not all about postgraduate MSc courses but much more to do with day-to-day skills required to introduce genomics diagnostics into routine clinical practice.

6. **Public engagement.** We have started a series of public engagement activities to raise the profile of the 100,000 Genomes Project and to hear the views of the general public.

7. **Stimulate research and ‘UK plc’.** Many clinicians in the Trust are members of ‘GeCiPs’ (Genomics Clinical Interpretation Partnerships), which are newly created networks of like-minded clinicians and academics who are interested in using the data created by the 100,000 Genomes Project to further understand human disease, leading to the development of new medical devices, faster clinical trials, new drugs and treatments and potentially, in time, new cures. The UK Government sees this as a way of stimulating commercial interest from the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries; the North East and North Cumbria are in a strong position to engage in this endeavour.
Tailoring health care to each person's unique genetic makeup is becoming widely established in clinical practice – testing a patient for the presence of a specific mutation or biomarker at diagnosis can ensure they receive the therapy that will be most effective for them.

NewGene is a pioneer in developing, validating and delivering such molecular diagnostic tests using the latest high throughput sequencing and genotyping platforms.

NewGene's clinical and laboratory expertise is applied to deliver services to the NHS and other healthcare providers around the world. Utilising the latest technologies NewGene is able to offer significant benefits that can lead to improved clinical delivery:

- **Response**: Rapid turnaround times;
- **Savings**: Competitive pricing;
- **Quality**: ISO15189 Medical Laboratories reference 8220; and
- **Flexibility**: Bespoke service design.

The treatment and management of cancer is increasingly dependent on complex molecular diagnostics to ensure that patients have access to the most effective, targeted therapies. NewGene works closely with Oncologists and Pathologists to ensure patients in the north east receive comprehensive diagnostic testing. Signalling through the MAPK pathway leads to an increase in a number of cellular processes relevant to cancer survival and so it is the target for anti-cancer therapies such as tyrosine kinase inhibitors. However, mutations in the genes involved in the pathway can modulate the effectiveness of these drugs and so understanding the molecular profile of an individual patient’s disease is important.

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The diseases for which NewGene delivers molecular pathology tests are listed in the table above with the genes that are tested in each.

For more information contact angela.silmon@newgene.org.uk or visit www.newgene.org.uk
Curing through

By Helen Rae

A health partnership has been officially launched to harness clinical and academic expertise. HELEN RAE takes a look at how the collaboration is benefitting patients in the North East

Health experts are always looking for excellent ways to enhance care as they strive to provide the best services for patients.

Newcastle Academic Health Partners (NAHP) was recently launched to ensure patients in the region benefit sooner from new treatments, diagnostics and prevention strategies.

Officially bringing together Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals and Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trusts with Newcastle University, the NAHP is delivering world-class services through collaborative scientific research, education and clinical care.

Professor Wan-Fai Ng, a professor of rheumatology at Newcastle University and honorary consultant rheumatologist at Newcastle’s Freeman Hospital, is carrying out research that highlights the success of the collaboration.

Professor Ng specialises in Sjögren’s Syndrome, a multi-system autoimmune disorder that affects an estimated 500,000 people in the UK alone.

His research into Primary Sjögren’s Syndrome has led to a significant improvement in the number of patients treated for the condition, not only in the North East but on an international scale.

“There is a real togetherness as we try to combat this disorder - clinicians, researchers, scientists and patients, all working as one to find the cures and treatments of tomorrow,” said Professor Ng.

Sjögren’s Syndrome sees the body’s immune system attack the glands that produce important fluids such as saliva and sweat. This causes irritations like dry mouth and dry eyes, but can also cause joint and muscle pain and chronic fatigue, leading to depression and a lower quality of life.

The disorder is heavily linked to females as 90-95% of sufferers are women. More serious cases can affect other parts of the body such as blood vessels, lymph glands, nerves, lungs and kidneys.

Previously there has been little understanding of the condition and doctors have struggled to diagnose patients because the symptoms are so broad and symptomatic of other conditions.

Now, thanks to the NAHP, Professor Ng is leading the way with research into the condition as he has set up the Primary Sjögren’s Syndrome Registry - a national research biobank of people with the illness.

The registry is based at Newcastle University and it is helping to change the way that the illness is treated and diagnosed.

Professor Ng said: “Currently there is no cure for Sjögren’s Syndrome and, therefore, further research is desperately needed to gain a better understanding of the condition and develop more effective treatments.

“The registry aims to establish a group of 1,200 patients with confirmed Primary Sjögren’s Syndrome so that we can understand their symptoms, how they have been treated and how they have responded to the different therapies.

“All of this information is held in a biobank, anonymously and in a confidential manner, and is essential for future academic and clinical research in developing new approaches to treatment.”

As well as helping to facilitate clinical trials, the biobank also allows researchers to specifically choose patients for studies in an efficient way.

For example, a team working on research into preventing skin irritation as a side-effect of Sjögren’s Syndrome would refer to this biobank and, in minutes, be able to select the most appropriate patients.

So far, specialists from more than 37 centres across the UK have expressed an interest in using the registry, with increasing numbers of patients joining.

The registry has been such a success that Professor Ng, also a co-director for Arthritis Research UK’s Newcastle Experimental Arthritis Treatment Centre, was recently awarded the Michael Mason prize by the British Society for Rheumatology for his work.

The registry’s success can be seen in the significant increase in the number of patients diagnosed with the condition in recent years, rising from 80 to 300 in Newcastle alone since 2009.

Each year, Professor Ng now receives anything between 80 and 100 referrals for patients suspected of having Sjögren’s Syndrome.

Newcastle’s Freeman Hospital is a leading referral centre for Sjögren’s Syndrome where patients are treated by specialists in the field.

One patient is Michelle Harrison, who says she has benefitted from the world-class work carried out in the North East.

Michelle, 44, a clinical quality manager, is a long-time sufferer of the condition.

The illness started when she was just 16-years-old. Michelle constantly felt fatigued, suffering from rheumatic pains and became so unwell that she had to be admitted to hospital twice.

As little was known about the condition, her symptoms were repeatedly mistaken for other issues, often referred to as psychological.

“I was eventually seen by a rheumatologist in Newcastle who had an interest in Sjögren’s Syndrome and he was able to diagnose my condition almost immediately. I was relieved but it took a long time to come to terms with my diagnosis,” said Michelle.

Now, Michelle is an active member of the North East Sjögren’s Syndrome Association which she helped to set up with fellow patients, spouses and friends.

And she says this came about as a direct result of Professor Ng’s registry.

“Professor Ng invited all his patients to a meeting as soon as the registry was up and running to explain what it was all about, and to update on the latest developments in research,” she said.

“This had a profound effect on all of us. We could see how passionate Professor Ng and his colleagues, including research nurse, Sheryl Mitchell, are about the work they do.

“We all immediately felt involved, as if we were part of a special community, and it’s exciting to know we are integral to international research with the potential to access the latest drugs as part of clinical trials.”

The group has gone from strength-to-strength with membership rising from 25 to 90 over the four years it has been in existence.

Meeting quarterly, the sessions invite key speakers to talk about the latest studies and where the research is going, also allowing patients to meet other sufferers of the disorder and share experiences.

Although she lives in County Durham, Michelle still chooses to...
travel to Newcastle for ongoing care.
She said: “Not only does Newcastle have specialists in Sjögren’s Syndrome, but because the symptoms are so widespread you often need to be referred to other experts, such as ophthalmologists for your eyes or dermatologists for your skin.
“The hospitals in Newcastle have many experts in these fields and I am often seen in joint clinics with more than one specialist involved.

“This way, I have that peace of mind that no matter what flares up under this condition I am in the safest hands possible,”
For more information about the Primary Sjögren’s Syndrome Registry, visit www.sjogrensregistry.org
If you are interested in Sjögren’s Syndrome meetings or want more information, go to www.sjorgensnortheast.com

SJÖGREN’S SYNDROME FACTS
■ It is an autoimmune disorder
■ The condition means the body’s immune system attacks saliva and tear glands, along with other secretory glands in the body
■ There is no cure for the illness, however treatments can be used to help ease symptoms
■ More women than men are affected and the condition is usually diagnosed in people aged 40 to 60 years old.
A newly established initiative was the development of drop-in sessions for junior doctors with the intention to convene sessions on a regular basis at both the Freeman Hospital and Royal Victoria Infirmary sites on an alternating basis. The first session was very well received with junior doctors provided with advice and guidance as to how to identify audit projects, how to register their projects and where to go for the best available evidence.

As in previous years, there has been a plethora of guidelines issued by National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) during the reporting period. In 2015/16, a total of 147 NICE guidelines were issued covering Diagnostic Technical Guidelines; Highly Specialised Technology Guidelines; Interventional Procedure Guidelines; Medical Technology Guidelines; National Clinical Guidelines; Quality Standards and Technology Appraisal Guidelines. A rising out of the evolving national requirements the Trust reassessed the way in which it monitors the implementation of its non-compliant NICE guidelines, with the CEAGC focusing on the non-compliant guidelines which represent the highest clinical risk to the Trust. The guidelines which represented a significantly less clinical risk are consistently monitored in a structured manner. Whilst the challenge of implementing all of the NICE guidelines remains, the Trust is in a strong position to focus on those areas of immediate need and hence satisfy respective commissioner requirements.

Clinical Effectiveness and Audit most distinctly featured heavily in a Care Quality Commission assessment and the opportunity was afforded to share examples of good practice with the Inspectors who were clearly impressed by the high calibre of ongoing work. Our Clinical Audit/Governance leads are to be commended for their tireless efforts in driving forward clinical effectiveness and audit in their directorates and to all staff who have participated in clinical audit and continue to ensure the very best quality of care is delivered for their patients.
Medical Director’s Statement

The past year has been yet another resounding success culminating in the remarkable achievement of being the only Teaching Hospital in the country, and one of only five Trusts, to be rated as ‘Outstanding’ by the CQC. This demonstrates the consummate commitment and professionalism of all of our staff. My grateful thanks go to each and every one of them.

In spite of a challenging political climate, the Trust also maintained financial robustness returning a surplus – one of only a few Trusts in the UK to achieve this. We are determined to do everything in our power to maintain our strong position, but recognise that this will be particularly challenging over the next few years. As ever, any surplus is reinvested directly into patient care by facilitating further service development and expansion where appropriate.

The main emphasis remains quality and patient safety as reflected in the CQC inspection outcome. This priority is well embedded and continues to be propagated by the Clinical Risk Department and the Quality and Patient Safety Team. The latter comprises the Director of Quality and Effectiveness and senior medical and nursing staff. The Trust mortality rate remains the lowest in the region, which is particularly creditable given the fact that Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals have one of the largest and most complex specialty portfolios in the UK. Quality reports are produced for Board scrutiny on a monthly basis and remain impressive. A blame free culture has been established with transparency and learning being at the heart of the quality agenda.

We recognise that there are challenging times ahead and this Trust is determined to retain its position of influence locally, nationally and internationally. It is essential that the current austerity mantra does not impact upon our ability to deliver high quality and efficient patient care – we are determined that this will not be compromised under any circumstances.

Nationally, we are influential in progressing clinical pathways, 7-day working and timely cancer treatment and care. Seven day working has been firmly embedded in this organisation for some time and our Accident and Emergency Department was one of, if not the first, unit to establish consultant presence on a 24 hour/7 days a week basis.

We continue to strive for improvement in all areas and continuously review future strategic plans in a changing climate. Workforce challenges continue in certain specialties due to inadequate national workforce planning over several years, but we have adopted innovative new ways of working and recruitment so as to minimise any potential compromise to the organisations ability to deliver high quality care to our patients. This includes the introduction of Teaching and Speciality Fellows who have all been of high calibre and had their expectations fulfilled. The Research and Development Directorate continues to flourish and encourages collaboration between the Trust and Newcastle University, which has always been, and continues to be, fruitful in respect of research output and introduction of new techniques and treatments.

Bed pressures continue to be a problem and are further exacerbated by our philosophy that ‘our doors are always open’. Other Trusts, not embracing such a philosophy, regularly divert patients to us, which further exacerbates the difficulties, particularly in the winter months. This Trust is determined to continue the current policy of ‘patients come first’. Improvements in Ambulatory Care have enabled more rapid discharge for those patients not requiring admission but patient flow continues to be restricted by community capacity limitations and availability of step down care.

As a Foundation Trust, we currently enjoy independence and are determined to retain this, as we believe that this is in the long-term interests of our patients in Newcastle upon Tyne, regionally, nationally and internationally. The regulatory overload is overbearing but we will continue to maintain our commitment and invest accordingly.

I would like to offer my personal thanks to all who work within the Trust in our common goal to provide high quality healthcare for the residents of Newcastle upon Tyne and surrounds, and tertiary care to those from further afield. We are indebted to their expertise, professionalism, loyalty and commitment – all share equal credit for what has been an exceptionally successful year.

Andrew Welch FRCS
Medical Director

We are determined to do everything in our power to maintain eminence, but recognise that this will be particularly challenging over the next few years.
As the name suggests, Northern Medical Physics and Clinical Engineering is a Clinical Directorate which delivers a range of patient-facing and scientific services with foundations in the physical sciences and which are delivered by the application of medical technology.

Our key goal is to deploy the skills and expertise of our staff in ways which assist the Trust in meeting its strategic objectives. Our Healthcare Scientist workforce achieves this through their delivery of clinical and scientific services, teaching, innovation and research. We deliver:

• A range of direct patient-facing services including Visual Evoked Diagnostics, Microvascular Studies, Nuclear Medicine and Bone Mineral Density;
• Scientific support to patient services provided by others e.g. Spinal Monitoring during surgery;
• Scientific services in support of other Directorates who use medical technology and which are aimed at ensuring service quality, patient safety and/or legislative compliance e.g. Diagnostic Radiology Physics, Radiation Protection Advice, MRI physics services and audiometry;
• We host a NICE-funded medical technology Evaluation Centre;
• Research, development and innovation. Devices which have been made available commercially include the Newcastle Infant Dialysis and Ultrafiltration System (NIDUS), the ‘Peepod’ uroflowmetry device, and the ‘Safe-Place’, a device to aid the placement of neonatal intravenous catheters;
• Teaching and training including the Modernising Scientific Careers Programmes in Medical Physics and Cardiac, Vascular, Respiratory & Sleep Sciences and Radiation Safety courses for FRCR candidates; and
• In addition to supporting the work of Clinical Directorates in Newcastle, we provide scientific services to 10 other acute Trusts across Northern England, provided both by staff based in Newcastle, and additionally at Durham, Darlington and Hartlepool, a range of clinical services delivered by our own staff based at these locations.

Our track record in research and teaching has resulted in our recognition as an Academic Clinical Directorate by the Trust and Newcastle University.
Recent Directorate Achievements

In the course of the last five years, the Directorate has developed an increased focus on supporting the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in the achievement of its strategic goals. In particular, the Directorate has:

- Developed the scope, depth and resilience of its clinical, scientific and technical services. These services provide diagnostic services in support of referring clinicians, help the Trust and other organisations to manage the risk associated with the use of ionising radiation, maintain legislative compliance and support the work of CGARD in maintaining safe, effective, high quality patient services in accordance with best practice standards and consistent with the Trust’s status as a member of the Shelford Group of leading Foundation Trusts;
- Further developed its research, development and innovation, attained Academic Clinical Directorate status, and secured, either on our own initiative or in collaboration with the Trust and Newcastle University colleagues a total of £15.5m research funding over the period 2014-2017. Research-active staff publish regularly in peer-reviewed journals;
- Won, through competitive tender in 2011 and 2014, contracts with NICE to provide a Health Technology Assessment Centre. Provided specialist scientific input to the Newcastle Device Evaluation Centre and the local Academic Health Science Network;
- Following the award of one of 3 national Health Education England contracts for the provision of a Modernising Scientific Careers Scientist Training Programme to Newcastle, made a major contribution to the teaching, training and assessment of trainees;
- Currently, the Directorate is engaged in establishing an externally certified Quality Management System and establishing a new internet microscope; and
- Key staff attributes of the Healthcare Scientist Workforce which make these developments possible include scientific, technical, research, analytical and problem-solving skills developed as a result of education and training in science and its application to medicine.

The Directorate has a strong track record of successful collaborative research with colleagues based at the Trust together with local academic and industrial organisations. Our particular expertise lies in the development of novel medical devices, often providing physiological and diagnostic data or providing a therapeutic function. We are keen to further develop these activities and welcome collaborative proposals from potential partners within Newcastle Hospitals and beyond.

Dr Chris Callicott
Director Northern Medical Physics and Clinical Engineering

Review of the Year 2015/16
The number of clinics that we offer has continued to grow with 10,000 patients visiting us in the past year. This activity is expected to more than double in the coming year with more services being offered to patients across the region and new services scheduled to start over the next 12 months.

The CQC inspected our centre earlier this year and were extremely impressed with Newcastle Hospitals providing care closer to home to thousands of patients and in such a convenient location. Our patients also agree with the CQC, with 100% of them stating that they would recommend us to Friends and Family. Feedback from our patient survey also highlighted how impressed patients were with our facilities and the care they have received. All of the patients/supporters surveyed agreed that our staff were friendly and approachable demonstrating care and respect for their needs.

Comments from patients included:
- Very impressed with facility, staff and service;
- All staff extremely friendly, thoughtful and helpful;
- Excellent service – no waiting time;
- We were able to pick our next appointment time which helps with family commitments;
- I find it so much more convenient coming here; and
- No problems with car-parking.

Providing high quality care to our patients has always been the primary mission of Newcastle Hospitals and being able to deliver this care to patients on their door step, is yet another example of innovation and how we put patients at the heart of everything we do.

The Newcastle Hospitals @ Cramlington, Manor Walks is fast approaching its first year anniversary. Over the past year we have provided highly specialised care to patients across Northumberland including ENT, Ophthalmology, Dermatology, Cancer Care and Audiology. All of our services are run by highly qualified, experienced senior clinical staff from Newcastle Hospitals.

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Providing high quality care to our patients has always been the primary mission of Newcastle Hospitals and being able to deliver this care to patients on their door step, is yet another example of innovation and how we put patients at the heart of everything we do.
During 2015/2016 we have further developed our workforce to provide safe and effective treatment pathways to deliver healthcare closer to home.

We were delighted to be accepted to be a pilot site for the NHS England Clinical Pharmacist initiative in collaboration with The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. This will facilitate better medicines management and enhance the level of clinical skills within our teams at Battle Hill Health Centre & Walk-in Centre, Ponteland Road Health Centre & Walk in Centre and Earsdon Park Medical Practice. During the last year and moving ahead we have been looking at changing the way we work in line with the Five Year Forward View and more recently the GP Forward View which involves care re-design aligned with the ‘New Models of Care’.

Patient involvement at each of our sites continues to increase, Battle Hill & Ponteland Road are open 7 days a week and also offer a number of outreach clinics, enabling patients to easily access out patient clinics within their home locality. This also assists us in offering weekend GP appointments for our registered patients as well as continuing our increasingly popular walk-in service which provides a team of skilled and experienced nurse practitioners to deal with minor injuries and ailments.

We continue to strengthen our relationships within our localities, GP Federations, Clinical Commissioning Groups and GP practices enabling wider collaboration in planning and delivering, safe, high quality effective locally based care.

Dr Ian Winterton
Chairman
Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation

An innovative pharmacy e-referral system, linking secondary and primary care services, wins two Health Service Journal Awards (HSJ) for Newcastle Hospitals

In November 2015, Newcastle Hospital’s pharmacy directorate was recognised nationally for its service innovation when it scooped two prestigious Health Service Journal awards.

The e-referral system, developed in partnership with North of Tyne Local Pharmaceutical Committee, is web-based and allows pharmacy staff to refer patients, at the point of discharge, to their local community pharmacist if it is identified that they need on-going support with their medicines.

Within three days of discharge a community pharmacist then contacts the patient to arrange a mutually convenient time for the initial consultation. Details of the consultation are then fed back to Newcastle Hospitals via the website system for future reference.

An initial audit of the project has shown that almost 90% of patients who met with their community pharmacist reported a better understanding of their medicines, and were now aware that the community pharmacist could support them. Early analysis also appears to show that patients who receive follow-up support from their community pharmacist are less likely to be readmitted to hospital within 30 days.

The contact has also meant that more patients are accessing public health services directly from their community pharmacies, such as smoking cessation and flu vaccination. Community pharmacists are also able to identify patients in need of additional support, such as a medicines home delivery service.

The project work won in the category of: Enhancing Care by Sharing Data and Information. In their summing up, the category Judges praised the project as being: “pioneering”, “inspiring” and “exceptional”.

The winners in each of 18 individual HSJ categories were pitted against each other and the pharmacy e-referral system also won the: Most Effective Adoption and Diffusion of Best Practice Award. The Judges commented that the project: “genuinely demonstrated adoption and diffusion of innovative practice across the region”.

Review of the Year 2015/16
Pharmacy Strategy Review: benchmarking, reviewing and transforming existing Newcastle Hospital’s pharmacy practice to ensure we provide the best care we can for our patients

Staff working within the Pharmacy Directorate at Newcastle Hospitals are extremely proud of the high standard of service they provide to Newcastle Hospital’s patients.

In a continued effort to maintain and improve on the quality of service we provide, the directorate began a project in 2015 to review existing medicine supply processes to see if changes could be made which would release staff time to focus on direct patient care.

One of the changes planned as a consequence of the review is the introduction of electronic drug cupboards on ward 30 at the RVI during September 2016. In addition to releasing nursing and pharmacy time from operational duties, it is hoped this innovative technology will ensure medicines are more readily available for patients resulting in fewer missed doses.

As part of the review senior pharmacists have also been collaborating with colleagues at a national level to help shape best practice, in particular ensuring clinical pharmacy resource is more focused on patients who need our support most. One other consequence of the service review during 2015/16 was the creation of a Medication Safety Officer post. This senior pharmacist will review and help us as a Trust to learn from medication related incidents.

Strategic changes as a consequence of the review will continue well into 2017 so we look forward to telling you more next year.

Early analysis appears to show that patients who receive follow-up support from their Community Pharmacist are less likely to be readmitted to hospital within 30 days

For he’s a jolly good Fellow

Neil Watson, Clinical Director of Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation at The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, has been designated a fellow of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, for distinction in the profession of pharmacy.

Royal Pharmaceutical Society Fellowship is an honour which recognises those individuals who have attained distinction in their pharmacy career and is one of the highest honours that can be bestowed upon its Members. As Fellowships are based on nominations from Members, they signify the esteem in which the individual is held by his or her peers.

Neil has worked in the NHS for his entire working life and, before his current role at Newcastle Hospitals, which he has held since April 2007, he was Chief Pharmacist at The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, London.

His primary areas of interest are Integrated Care, ensuring a more joined up approach to medicines optimisation across healthcare sectors and engagement with community pharmacy and Clinical Informatics, having successfully led the implementation of Electronic Prescribing in 2009.

On hearing of his award, Neil said: “I am delighted to receive this professional distinction. It has been a great privilege to have worked with so many great colleagues, and this award is all the more special because it is as a result of their nomination.”
Developing our Staff
Our Workforce

The Personal Touch Awards were launched in January 2013 and are now firmly embedded in the fabric of the organisation as a way to recognise the fantastic contribution that our staff and volunteers make to its success. The huge volume of nominations received throughout the year, highlights the phenomenal work that our staff and volunteers do every day across the organisation to ensure that patient care is enhanced at every opportunity.

The 2015 winners were from a variety of staff groups, with a whole range of clinical and non-clinical staff being represented amongst them. The winners also came from various areas of the Trust, including community, acute wards, and diagnostic departments and demonstrate the truly multi professional approach to placing patients at the heart of everything we do. Our winners provide a great example to us all, and remind us that everyone in the organisation makes a contribution to patient care, regardless of their role.

Throughout the year, our judging panel read several hundred nominations from patients, staff and the public, commenting on services provided and giving so many examples of our staff and volunteers ‘going the extra mile’ to make sure that patients receive the best of care. This really does embody the spirit of ‘healthcare at its very best with a personal touch’.

Personal Touch Award Winners 2015

Employee of the Year 2015
Caroline Ralph, Sister on Ward 9, Freeman Hospital

“It’s often said that nurses are angels and Caroline has got the spirit and heart of the most amazing angel.” This was the opening line from the student nurse’s nomination commending Caroline Ralph, Sister on Ward 9, Freeman Hospital for the outstanding support and guidance Caroline had shown during her time on the ward. Caroline taught not only the required skills and knowledge to do the job safely but she also demonstrated how kindness and love can transform the care experience for patients, their families and staff.

Team of the Year 2015
New Croft Centre, Sexual Health Clinic, Newcastle

This team, from the New Croft Centre, Sexual Health Clinic were nominated for the way in which they sensitively dealt with a patient and his partner when they attended the clinic to be tested for HIV. Individually the team offered outstanding warmth and compassion to the individuals. This winning team are a great demonstration of the truly multi professional approach to placing patients at the heart of everything we do.

Volunteer Winner of Quarter 4, 2015
Keaton Baker, Meet and Greet Volunteer

Keaton was recognised for his natural ability to put visitors and patients at their ease whilst escorting them through the hospital corridors to find their destination. Keaton rarely fail to raise a smile from whoever he meets, despite some visitors being in an anxious and worried state.

Nomination quote: Keaton is an inspiration; he has overcome great adversity and has never let his condition prevent him from achieving his goals. In his words he says ‘It may stop my body moving but it doesn’t stop my mouth’.

160 Review of the Year 2015/16
Volunteering in Newcastle Hospitals

At the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, our volunteers make a valuable contribution in supporting our staff to add value to our services and help to enhance the patient experience.

To ensure that we offer the very best in volunteering experience to our volunteers and staff, we undertook an extensive review of the Trust Volunteer Service, to ensure that moving forward, we continue to deliver a high quality volunteer service with the ultimate aim of being recognised as exemplar for innovative volunteering in the region.

2015/16 has been a very busy, rewarding and successful year for the Voluntary Services department. Demand for volunteering opportunities has continued to grow month by month and 25 new roles were developed and the number of volunteers recruited rose by 109%!

Involvement in the past Trust career events held in October and April made a huge impact on this number as people joined the volunteer service looking to gain experience in order to pursue a career in the health service.

We are incredibly grateful to the 800 plus voluntary workforce who make an invaluable contribution of supporting our hospitals each year, raising thousands of pounds and giving over 87,000 hours of their time. Our volunteers bring human kindness and their dedication and commitment provide an additional level of “personal touch” which all goes to enhancing the patient experience.
**Encouraging Youth Volunteering in our Hospitals**

The Department of Health alongside the Cabinet Office, NHS England and Public Health England is keen to support the widening of opportunities for volunteering and social action for young people across the health and care system. One of the aims of the Volunteer Service for 2015/16 was to increase the number of young people helping within our hospitals, providing students from our local schools and colleges with the opportunity to gain valuable experience and knowledge of helping in a clinical environment. Of the 231 volunteers recruited between 2015/2016, 55% were aged between 16 and 25.

Involving young people in supporting the health and care of others is part of delivering the vision for health and care, and supports The Five Year Forward View, and the national #iwill campaign. Identified as exemplars of good practice, the Volunteer Service was approached earlier this year by Volunteering Matters (formerly CSV) to present at the “Developing Youth Volunteering in Health Care” seminar for the North of England region on “Supporting and Managing Volunteers 16 years+”. The event was attended by members of the Cabinet Office, NHS England and Volunteer Managers from various NHS Trusts throughout the North of England.

**Supporting the Dementia Strategy 2015-2020**

Volunteer Services have been working with Nurse Specialists for Dementia Care to develop a range of volunteer roles which will support Strategic Aim 1: Care and Partnership of the Dementia Strategy 2015-2020. The new Dementia Support role requires volunteers to engage with patients at their bedside using touch screen interactive “My Life Reminiscence Therapy” system, which contains a huge range of photographs, video clips, radio shows, music and lyrics dating back to the 1930s. The system helps to spark recollections that can stimulate conversation between the patient and the volunteer and is proven to ease distress and anxiety, improve well-being and provide more personalised care.

**We really appreciate all that the volunteers do within A&C NCCC. This benefits the patients by getting letters out in a timely manner. All our staff value the selfless work that the volunteers do day in and day out.**

*Rachel Luke, Northern Centre for Cancer Care, Administration Manager*

**Building new partnerships with local charities, schools and voluntary sector organisations**

**Forward Assist**

We are currently working alongside local charity Forward Assist to launch practical volunteer placements to enable veterans to experience different roles in the NHS. Forward Assist identifies suitable veterans and then works alongside Volunteer Services, to ensure the veterans are supported and have a positive experience with Newcastle Hospitals. We hope that this is a programme which develops successfully, and continues to expand.

**Tiny Lives**

The Tiny Lives Trust is a registered charity that helps to care for premature and sick newborn babies, their mothers and families in the Special Care Baby Unit of the Newcastle Neonatal Service based in Ward 35 of the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle. Volunteer services have worked alongside the charity in supporting them to recruit volunteers to offer emotional support to patients requiring bed rest after having a premature baby.

**Berwick Cancer Services Support**

Berwick Cancer Services provides a free transport service for patients living within the Berwick area attending Freeman/RVI Hospitals for outpatients undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy treatment. Throughout 2015/16 Volunteer Services have supported this valuable charity to ensure that their drivers receive occupational health checks and DBS checks as part of their recruitment to become a volunteer.

**Gosforth Academy, Studio West, Newcastle College, Newcastle University**

Throughout the year, Volunteer Services has enjoyed engaging with local schools and colleges, presenting at career events, talking to students about the variety of volunteer opportunities available throughout the Trust and offering advice on how to register as a volunteer.

162  Review of the Year 2015/16
Since the Children’s Heart Unit Fund shop in the Freeman Hospital opened in February 2015, we have had 23 NHS Volunteers who have been referred via the trust Voluntary Service. Each one of our volunteers has been professional, enthusiastic, trustworthy and has really enjoyed working in the shop. A lot of the visitors and patients enjoy having someone to talk to about their own or their loved one’s situation and our volunteers appear to be brilliant listeners as well!

Arthur Campbell, Parent Trustee and Vice Chair, CHUF

Having volunteers in the Emergency Department enables us to achieve the high standard of care we strive for. Volunteers make time for the more vulnerable patients which enables nurses to provide other treatments whilst the patient feels comfortable and safe.

Becky Hill, Sister - Emergency Department

It is well researched how effective volunteers are in supporting ‘hospital life’... We are very excited at the prospect of further development of our volunteer service and extension of the volunteering portfolio by increasing the numbers of volunteers and making a significant impact on the quality of care and support experienced by our patients.

Recruitment and Social Media

The Trust has had an outstanding first year on social media - Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Facebook page is now one of the largest and most successful NHS Trust Facebook pages.

This has supported us to achieve exceptional results in a number of areas including:

- Over 1 million people watching our international recruitment video;
- Circa 15,000 applications directly from jobs posted on our Facebook page;
- Over 500,000 unique views per month of research, awards, job profiles and much more;
- Increased diversity and source of applications of newly qualified nurses; and
- Increased applications too hard to fill and roles experiencing shortage of supply.

This has enabled the Trust to attract and recruit the very best people.
New Croft Centre Sexual Health Service

New Croft Centre Sexual Health Service attended Newcastle PRIDE again for the 5th year running, we offered sexual health promotion via a stall in the Steve Paske Health Zone and an Express STI Testing Service as part of the Health Zone Area. Newcastle PRIDE is a festival bringing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) people and their families and friends together in an environment where they can feel at home, feel safe and ultimately be themselves.

Pride presented an opportunity for New Croft to:

- Promote a positive and friendly team approach which would encourage festival goers to seek advice and access sexual health services in the future;
- Blow away myths, attitudes and barriers in relation to those apprehensive about attending sexual health services;
- Identify cases of STIs & HIV that would otherwise remain undiagnosed; and
- Provide targeted sexual health promotion and prevention messages to LGBT groups to improve sexual health and publicise local sexual health services.

Outcomes

- Over 2000 people accessed sexual health promotion information and free condoms from our stall;
- 257 people received a full STI screen at Pride 2016;
- 132 were male, 115 female and 6 Trans;
- 166 identified as LGBT;
- 61 people had returned after accessing the New Croft STI testing service at Pride 2015;
- The majority were between 16 and 20 years of age but the age range was 16 to those identifying as ‘over 60’; and
- 100% said they felt welcomed by staff.
Feedback from patients:

- It was lush
- Smiles all around, thank you
- Thanks for all your amazing work. It is greatly appreciated
- Happy Pride x
- You guys rock
- Keep coming!
- Great staff once again, always made to feel welcome
- Unreal service, so lovely & important, A ★★★★★ rating
- So friendly & welcoming, no judgments
- Fabulous service, Well done guys
- You’re always so lovely every year; it’s a pleasure coming here!
- You guys rock
- Keep coming!
- Great staff once again, always made to feel welcome
- Unreal service, so lovely & important, A ★★★★★ rating

Our staff, our patients together we make a difference

Valuing diversity has a positive impact, find out more at: www.newcastle-hospitals.org.uk/equality

The New Croft Team are busy planning for an even bigger and better Newcastle PRIDE 2017
Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

Policy application relating to employment of disabled persons:

Newcastle Hospitals is committed to the employment and career development of disabled people. Within our Recruitment Policies, we proudly display the two tick disability, having given a commitment to offer a guaranteed interview to all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria and consider applicants solely on their abilities. Reasonable adjustments are made at each stage of the recruitment and selection process to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants.

We value the commitment of our staff and make every effort to ensure employees who become disabled during employment are supported and their skills retained in employment, whether through redeployment, retraining or alteration of working arrangements. We have a Redeployment Policy which sets out these steps.

As an organisation we also actively engage with our disabled staff through promoting our Disabled Staff Network. Working in partnership we continue to work hard to ensure all staff develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make our Trust commitments work.

As further evidence of our wish to be acknowledged as ‘the NHS Employer of Choice’, Newcastle Hospitals continues to be highly committed to playing a key role in delivering a health service where equality, diversity and human rights are embraced and communicated in the everyday work of staff.

Through ‘Project Choice’, the Trust offers young Newcastle adults with learning difficulties, disabilities or autism, opportunities to support them to become positive role models, and enable them to actively contribute and feel valued for what they achieve. This Project equips students with work-based transferable skills enabling them to be work-ready after completion of an academic year, and also provides a recognised qualification in Employability Skills.

The Trust recognises that positive action can help to remove barriers to employment and proactively addresses the under-representation of disabled staff in employment. Now in its 4th year, the project has had fantastic results with 77% of all applicants having transitioned into employment; (this is exceptional when compared to a national average of 7% of people with a learning disability being in employment). 71% of those who have gained employment have secured employment within the Trust. The remaining Project Choice participants have transitioned into further education programmes or further supported work experience, with a view to becoming work ready in the near future.

The Project is delivered in partnership with Gateshead College and supports Newcastle Hospitals’ as a leading employer in:

• the promotion of equality and diversity;
• challenging discrimination; and
• promoting equality in employment.

The achievements have been recognised through receipt of a number of awards as follows:

• Winner of the National Learning Disability and Autism Award - The Employer of people with Disabilities Award July 2016;
• April 2015 - NIACE Learner of the Year award for the Northern region;
• June 2015 - CIPD People Development Award June 2015;
• July 2015 - highly commended in the National ENEI awards under the Community Impact category;
• November 2015 - HSJ award (Workforce category); and
• December 2015 - Joint North East Leadership Academy award with City Hospitals Sunderland (North East Leadership Academy) for Outstanding Collaborative Leadership.

Our students have also been individually recognised:

• Sean Hardy National won the Learning & Work Institutes Learning for Work Individual Award;
• Zara Amin won ‘Learner of the Year Award’ 2016;
• Adam Reid won the ‘Rachel Thorpe Memorial Award’ 2016;
• Christen Naylor won the ‘Edge Award’ 2016; and
• Jacques Reid won the Learning at Work Award as part of Adult Learners Week (2015).
All of the Trust’s policies and procedures are subject to a full review every three years, this includes a thorough equality analysis to ensure full consideration is given to the potential effects on different groups protected from discrimination by the Equality Act. Our aim is to consider whether there are any unintended consequences and ensure the policy will be fully effective and inclusive of all staff. The Trust also uses equality information, and the results of engagement with protected groups and others, to understand the actual effect or the potential effect policies or decisions. This enables us to identify practical steps to tackle any negative effects or discrimination, to advance equality and to foster good relations.

Staff Networks – We continue to grow our three staff networks (BAME, LGBT and Disability) to engage with and support staff and continue to promote awareness of equality and inclusion within the Trust. The staff networks have provided a valuable forum for discussion and debate which draws upon personal knowledge and experience. By listening to staff, the Trust is able to improve staff experience, enhance training and increase awareness.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion:
- The Trust has developed its own Equality and Diversity branding ‘Our Staff, our patients, together we make a difference’, and we continue to develop and promote its use in a number of activities to raise awareness including dedicated staff network and publicity materials;
- The Trust continues to meet the legal requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and comply with the NHS Equality Delivery System (EDS2) and progress against equality action plan continues to be monitored by the Health, Equality and Wellbeing Committee;
- The Trust has implemented, monitors and is taking active steps in relation to the Workforce Race Equality Standard;
- The Trust is part of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme a good practice employers’ forum on sexual orientation. We also participate in the Workplace Equality Index, a leading tool for employers to measure their efforts to tackle discrimination and create inclusive workplaces for lesbian, gay and bisexual employees and continue to make good progress;
- In July 2015 the Trust had a ‘formal’ presence at Northern Pride. The event increased engagement with LGBT staff and the local LGBT community. This has become an annual event in our calendar; and
- ‘Diversity Days’ are routinely highlighted via the Trust Intranet, HR Equality and Inclusion pages.

Equality Reporting

All of the Trusts policies and procedures are subject to a full review every three years, this includes a thorough equality analysis to ensure full consideration is given to the potential effects on different groups protected from discrimination by the Equality Act. Our aim is to consider whether there are any unintended consequences and ensure the policy will be fully effective and inclusive of all staff. The Trust also uses equality information, and the results of engagement with protected groups and others, to understand the actual effect or the potential effect policies or decisions. This enables us to identify practical steps to tackle any negative effects or discrimination, to advance equality and to foster good relations.

Staff Networks – We continue to grow our three staff networks (BAME, LGBT and Disability) to engage with and support staff and continue to promote awareness of equality and inclusion within the Trust. The staff networks have provided a valuable forum for discussion and debate which draws upon personal knowledge and experience. By listening to staff, the Trust is able to improve staff experience, enhance training and increase awareness.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion:
- The Trust has developed its own Equality and Diversity branding ‘Our Staff, our patients, together we make a difference’, and we continue to develop and promote its use in a number of activities to raise awareness including dedicated staff network and publicity materials;
- The Trust continues to meet the legal requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and comply with the NHS Equality Delivery System (EDS2) and progress against equality action plan continues to be monitored by the Health, Equality and Wellbeing Committee;
- The Trust has implemented, monitors and is taking active steps in relation to the Workforce Race Equality Standard;
- The Trust is part of the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme a good practice employers’ forum on sexual orientation. We also participate in the Workplace Equality Index, a leading tool for employers to measure their efforts to tackle discrimination and create inclusive workplaces for lesbian, gay and bisexual employees and continue to make good progress;
- In July 2015 the Trust had a ‘formal’ presence at Northern Pride. The event increased engagement with LGBT staff and the local LGBT community. This has become an annual event in our calendar; and
- ‘Diversity Days’ are routinely highlighted via the Trust Intranet, HR Equality and Inclusion pages.
Support for the armed forces

The Trust is proud to work with the Armed Forces and has supported Reservists for a number of years, in the belief that this provides mutual benefit to both the individual and to the Trust through the invaluable, transferable skills they have acquired between their military and NHS roles.

Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust currently employ 21 Reservist, several of whom have been mobilised. The Trust has a dedicated HR Policy for Reservists providing additional paid leave of up to one week. We run a civilian work placement scheme with Careers Transition Partnership and work closely with local charity Forward Assist to support veterans. We have a long term vision to actively increase the number of Reservists with local Tri-Service units attending Hospital Careers Days and the two Trust “Summertime Special” Opportunities events.

In 2016 the Trust was awarded the Silver Award by the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, a further improvement on the 2015 Bronze Award, in recognition of its progressive approach to employing all members of the Armed Forces Community, Reservists and Veterans to its workforce. The award recognises those employers who pledge support and demonstrate their commitment to the Armed Forces and take a positive stance towards existing or prospective employees who are members of the armed forces community.

This shows our ongoing commitment to our reservists and flexibility towards annual training commitments and mobilisation of reservist employees and support the employment of cadet instructors, armed forces veterans (including wounded, injured and sick) and military spouses/partners.

The Trust works with local Reserve Forces to provide opportunities to promote the role of a Reservist and to support their recruitment. We recognise that medics in the forces are expected to handle the most demanding situations in a role that requires excellent clinical care, physical and mental fitness, courage, leadership, initiative and discipline. An ethos which is very much in line with our own. Reservists relish major demanding challenges with an unremitting ‘can do’ attitude, and are very often at the cutting edge of new developments and techniques – experiences which they bring back to the benefit of our patients.

We shall continue to work with our Armed Forces networks to support those leaving regular service into civilian work and benefit from the skills and experience they bring.
SEVEN medics from Newcastle's hospitals heading to Nepal to research the effects of combat at altitude.

Medics from Newcastle have travelled thousands of miles to Nepal to take part in pioneering research to prepare British troops for combat at high altitudes.

The seven reservists, from hospitals in the city, specialise in trauma and emergency care.

The medics join a UK team drawn from the British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force to conduct a variety of medical research experiments studying the impact of extreme altitude on the human body.

Colonel Bibek Banerjee, the Commanding Officer at Fenham's 201 Field Hospital where the reservists are based, said: “Aside from the valuable medical research being undertaken, this is an important event for members of the Army Reserve enabling them to be challenged physically and mentally in a team that spans the rank ranges, experience and length of service.

“The lessons they learn about themselves and each other will benefit immensely future deployed operational service, which similarly challenges people.”

The Newcastle Hospitals Trust says it is hugely supportive of the opportunities that expeditions of this type present.

Sir Leonard Fenwick, chief executive for the Newcastle Hospitals, said: “We are very proud of our staff who fly the flag for reservists working in the NHS. Indeed we consider ourselves immensely fortunate to be in a position to benefit from the invaluable, transferable skills they have acquired between their military and NHS roles.

“Medics in the forces are expected to handle the most demanding situations in a role that requires excellent clinical care, physical and mental fitness, courage, leadership, initiative and discipline. An ethos which is very much in line with our own.

“Reservists relish major demanding challenges with an unremitting ‘can do’ attitude, and are very often at the cutting edge of new developments and techniques – experiences which they bring back to the benefit of our patients.”

The research expedition centres on the Dhaulagiri massif – the 7th highest mountain on Earth whose peak reaches a staggering 8,167m.

Leading the 201 Field Hospital team on ‘Exercise Dhaulagiri Serpent’ is Lieutenant Colonel Laura Attwood who works as a Consultant in Emergency Medicine at the Royal Victoria Infirmary's Great North Trauma and Emergency Centre, and Air Doctor with the Great North Air Ambulance Service.

Lt Col Attwood has extensive experience in the military field having been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan where she worked in the Emergency Hospital at Camp Bastion.

She said: “The Northern contingent will rise to above 5,300m to conduct High Altitude Medical Research. We are looking to understand how we can adapt more quickly, and thus fight more effectively without succumbing to the effects of high altitudes, especially when deployed to such environments at short notice.

“The 201 trek team is participating in several studies but our primary focus is apnoeic training and physiological adaptations to altitude. In essence, this means we will be holding our breath to make our oxygen levels fall several times per day for the six weeks prior to the trip. The aim is to see if that preparation helps to reduce altitude sickness from developing.

“Whilst this sounds like an arduous expedition, it will be an exciting and challenging opportunity, not just for myself, but for the 12-man team taking the journey to Nepal.”

Reservists going to the expedition from the Newcastle Hospitals are:

- Lt Col Laura Attwood – Consultant in Emergency Medicine, Newcastle’s RVI and Pre Hospital Care Consultant with the Great North Air Ambulance Service (GNAAS)
- Maj Chris Johnson – Registrar in Anaesthesia, Newcastle’s RVI
- Lt Ben Earle-Wright – Foundation Doctor, the Newcastle Hospitals
- Cpl Sara Palmer – Staff Nurse in the Emergency Department, Newcastle’s RVI
- Cpl Alex Cairns – Staff Nurse in the Emergency Admission Suite, Freeman Hospital
- Pte Annie Sheppard – Health Care Assistant
- Cpl Christine Smith – Staff Nurse, Emergency Department, Newcastle’s RVI

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Working with young people in schools, colleges and universities

As part of our Workforce Strategy, and our ambition to be the preferred NHS Employer, we are very aware of our responsibility to contribute to our local community and to identify how to attract, recruit and retain people to work in the NHS. We also recognise the need to ensure that the workforce becomes more diverse, reflecting the community we serve.

The Newcastle Hospitals Apprentice Scheme launched in 2016, the only scheme to guarantee a job on completion of the programme, and we will continue to work with schools and colleges across the city to encourage young people to consider making their careers within the NHS.

The Trust is a very proactive employment partner in the Ouseburn Learning Trust (OLT), an educational partnership involving eight schools in the North Central and Eastern areas of Newcastle, and six partner organisations. The Trust was established in October 2014.

The vision of the Learning Trust is ‘to empower young people to excel as individuals and contribute to society’. The aim is to work in collaboration to raise aspirations and attainment in young people aged 3 to 19 by ‘delivering consistently high quality teaching and inspirational life experiences’.

Over the last year, this collaboration has resulted in some really exciting activities. The OLT having a common fundraising focus benefiting the Great North Children’s Hospital; One of our Medical Consultant staff is working with students from the high school to develop some young patient engagement activity, Newcastle Hospitals working with the OLT to enable them to secure funding from the Big Lottery to offer a ‘Cooking For All’ programme which will impact on the health and wellbeing of pupils and families.

The first NHS careers event in a primary school - ‘What’s My Job’ also took place under the auspices of the OLT. This was hosted by West Jesmond Primary School, and the children had the opportunity to carry out simulated X-rays, use stethoscopes, and were informed about the wide variety of roles available within the NHS.

Projects Choice

Positive Change

Careers Days

In addition to attending local school careers events, Newcastle Hospitals hosted a further two NHS Careers Conferences on its hospitals sites which have been very well received with over 1000 delegates at the two events. Our objective is to continue to promote the Trust as ‘the’ NHS Employer of Choice as well as provide the opportunity for people in our local community to talk to health professionals about the wide range of career opportunities and how to secure employment. Students from Newcastle schools, Universities and Colleges were all invited to view the range of careers within the NHS, as well as ‘have a go’ in activities such as ultrasound simulation, early 1900’s Electrocardiogram (ECG) techniques, and interactive tours of our facilities such as our laboratories and radiology were part of the event.

Working with colleges and universities

We continue to work in partnership with local universities, supporting careers events and recruitment onto further and higher education with the intention of future employment within Newcastle Hospitals.

An exciting development has been the creation of a new partnership with Newcastle College with a view to exploring how to better facilitate work experience and future employment opportunities through increased exposure to and working with Newcastle Hospitals.

Additionally, the Trust continues to work closely with Newcastle University Medical School to widen participation of young people interested in careers in medicine and dentistry. As part of this programme, the Trust has hosted ‘Twilight Tours’ for around 89 18-18 year olds who have been provided with an overview of careers in medicine and working in the hospitals. The tours were led by our Teaching Fellows – doctors who have ‘stepped off’ their own training programme to obtain experience in medical education. As part of the Tour, the young people met medical students, junior doctors in training as well as Consultant medical staff.
Education and developing our staff

The Trust continues to invest in the development of its workforce. We take great pride in the fact that all we do is aligned to delivering high class patient care. A key workforce objective remains our intent to strengthen the Trust’s value and reputation as a leading teaching hospital and as a centre for excellence in providing high quality education and training.

The opportunities available to our staff for learning, role development and career progression and the access staff have to high quality training, education and library and knowledge facilities demonstrates our commitment to them and to our patients in respect of the care they receive. Such opportunities form part of our employment package which helps us attract the very best practitioners, nationally and internationally.

This past year saw a reorganisation of the Education and Workforce Development Service. Already an integrated team, looking after the education of the medical and non-medical workforce, the reorganisation seeks to strengthen alignment of our offer more overtly to the delivery of high quality patient care and to supporting the patient safety agenda.

The new form and thus ways of working will more easily support the development of multi professional and inter-professional learning and the greater use of skill and expertise for the benefit of the whole workforce. This is an exciting development and we hope to be able to share some examples of new and innovative education approaches with you next year.

Included in this section are some of our highlights from the preceding 12 months.
Statutory and Mandatory Training

A process of continuous improvement has seen significant changes to the way in which we design, deliver, record and monitor this important activity. Work continues to build on this success and through the introduction of improved, systems and processes and stakeholder engagement the Trust is benefitting from improved compliance across the board. Key achievements include:

- A year end compliance rate of just under 90%, a significant improvement and testament to the efforts of our staff and managers;
- A revised Corporate Induction programme which facilitates large numbers of newly appointed staff being effectively inducted into the organisation early in their employment and the planned re-introduction of centralised induction for Foundation Doctors and Specialty Doctors (August 2016), with the content aligned to that of Corporate Induction;
- Overall Compliance for Induction was 99.05% at year end;
- The continued success of the Healthcare Academy for all newly appointed Healthcare Assistants, including the introduction of the Care Certificate can be measured by the early contribution the new employees make to the delivery of high quality, safe, compassionate care;
- Transition to a new learning management system supporting managers to more easily oversee the training and compliance of their staff;
- The new system has facilitated the reporting and monitoring of a much wider suite of training (not just Statutory and Mandatory training) and provides the facility for staff to use it as their personal training record. More work is needed on utilising the wider functionality throughout 2016/17 and this includes use of this system to support Nurse Revalidation, implemented in April 2016.

The opportunities available to our staff for learning, role development and career progression and the access staff have to high quality training, education and library and knowledge facilities demonstrates our commitment to them and to our patients in respect of the care they receive

Developing our Leaders

The Trusts Workforce Strategy outlines the purpose of developing and delivering patient-centred, professional and leadership development programmes to build capacity and competence for now and the future and to ensure the continued provision of “healthcare at its very best – with a personal touch”.

The provision of safe, high quality, compassionate care for every patient is the primary objective of every leader in the Trust; this also comes with ensuring responsible use of public funds to continuously improve the delivery of that care and clinical services to rising numbers of patients across seven days of the week.

Research shows that leadership and leadership development in healthcare is the most influential factor in shaping organisational culture and ensuring the necessary leadership behaviours, strategies and qualities are developed to achieve this aspiration. The Trust has a clear vision and can demonstrate its track record in developing its leadership community. This was recently affirmed by the “Outstanding” rating the Trust received from the Care Quality Commission.

The Strategy has driven a refresh of well-established programmes including the Postgraduate Clinical Leadership Certificate, a joint programme between NuTH and Newcastle University, our bespoke Leadership & Service Improvement Programme for Doctors in Training which is about to be offered on a multi professional basis, the NuTH Leadership Alumni Network established to support the ongoing leadership development of staff who have either completed leadership development programmes or who are interested in developing their leadership skills, the “Enhancing the Patient Experience by Managing our People” programme developed to assist managers to get the best out of their staff and the ILM Service Improvement Certificate, specifically designed for staff working in bands 1-4.

Additionally the strategy focusses on further developing our approach to Talent Management and Leadership Succession. Planning through strengthening our approach to Appraisal and Personal Development Planning, appraisal providing the process through which discussions are held with those who aspire too or who are working in leadership positions. Work continues on this important work stream and further information will be provided in the future.

Additionally the Trust also supports the ongoing development of a coaching culture - a process through which individuals are supported to address difficult situations, resolve conflict or learn new skills to become more effective in their role. This year has seen the further development of an internal body of Coaches who are supporting individuals in this way or as part of an in-house Development Programme.
Medical Education

The overall strategic aim of the Trust Medical Education Team is to ensure that all aspects of Medical Education at NuTH are delivered to a high standard in an innovative and cost-effective way.

The development of a Medical Education Strategy this year has helped the team to translate the strategic aims of the Trust Workforce Strategy in relation to the Medical workforce. This approach is comprehensive starting from School Students who are interested in a medical career as well as Undergraduate Medical Students and Junior Doctors at all stages of training. There has also been a focus on developing a faculty to deliver training which has included a very successful Teaching Fellow programme and an enthusiastic team of Clinical and Educational Supervisors to support the training programmes. We are proud of our innovation and engagement in the delivery of high quality Medical Education on a large scale to 550 Trainee Doctors, 170 Trust Doctors and 500 Medical Students in a wide range of clinical programmes.

The Medical Education Team work hard to oversee quality for the 71 specialty programmes delivered internally and yet again is very encouraged by the improvement of results in the GMC Trainee Survey, and our Quality Assurance process which was commended again by Health Education England North East (HEENE). This is a key priority as through delivering programmes which meet the needs of our patients, services, students, trainees and commissioners, as well as satisfying the requirements of many Royal Colleges, we continue to secure high quality trainees each year.

Highlights of this year have included:

Medical Education Work Experience and Events

The approach to work experience for school students in the Newcastle area and further afield interested in Medicine or other NHS careers has been developed and expanded. For Medical careers a number of So, you want to be a doctor? events have been delivered. There has also been improved collaboration with the Medical School in supporting the widening participation programme and a number of new initiatives have been introduced including Medical and Dental (MaD) mentoring visits for school children.

Several events have been held including a highly successful event organised jointly between NuTH, Newcastle and Cumbrian schools and the British Society for Endocrinology. This was attended by 120 sixth formers from all over the North East and Cumbria and received excellent feedback. A packed lecture theatre in the new RVI Education Centre, heard about how to apply for medical school and gained hands on experience in clinical areas as part of the day.

NuTH Teaching Fellow Programme

The role of the Teaching Fellow has extended into delivery of Postgraduate Education and their contribution to service has been exceptionally well received with involvement in a wide range of Quality Improvement, Patient Safety and Education Projects. Many projects have been presented at Trust, Regional and National meetings.

Trust-based training Programmes

This year the team has built on the success of the Newcastle Surgical Rotation (NSR) programme. This innovative in-house training programme was developed to mirror core surgical training and has attracted many doctors from outside the region. The programme has evaluated extremely well and has now established a model which is being applied to other areas. For example a Trust Based Higher Specialist equivalent programme for Orthopaedic Doctors commenced in August 2016. Training programmes in Emergency Medicine and Neonatal Medicine are in the pipeline.

2nd Annual Medical Education Update Day

An extremely successful day which attracted a multi-professional audience was held at Freeman Hospital Education Centre on 17th May 2016. A vibrant programme included workshops, lectures and poster presentations covering aspects of Education, Quality Improvement and Patient Safety. The event showcased the work of Medical Students and Junior Doctors in NuTH with many of the posters and presentations having subsequently been presented nationally and internationally. The event included the inaugural NuTH “Audit/Quality Improvement prize” which was open to all staff and won by Andrew Head (pharmacist) for his excellent work: Joining the dots. A multi-disciplinary approach to Insulin prescribing and blood glucose monitoring.

Physician Associates

Working in collaboration with Newcastle University Medical School we have developed a job descriptor for a new healthcare role to support challenges with wider workforce recruitment shortages and service gaps. The role, Physician Associate, will be implemented later in 2016.

Photographs: Newcastle Hospitals
Newcastle Surgical Training Centre (NSTC)

In the Newcastle Surgical Training Centre we are helping to shape the future of surgery. Listening to our surgical and interventional colleagues and working closely with industry the NSTC enables the development of new surgical technology. Training and innovation go hand in hand in the unit and underscore its success.

In January 2016 we unveiled our new one million pound extensions incorporating an extended operating theatre, a new lecture theatre and additional endoscopy/simulation rooms. This expansion has enabled us to significantly extend our portfolio of educational courses. The NSTC ethos is of embracing change and accommodating new surgical techniques such as robotic surgery, latest interventional skills and this has promoted the NSTC identity as a centre of excellence.

The NSTC lends itself to the dissemination of knowledge around the latest implant technology, optimal surgical techniques and rapid assimilation of surgical skills to minimise surgical failure. Allied with such is the continued work of the research arm of the unit which has seen collaboration with a number of industry partners to develop novel orthopaedic implants. Most recently the Northern Retrieval Centre (funded by generous grants from Charitable Trustees, FSF and William Leech Foundation) has been established and shall work closely with the NSTC to provide a comprehensive analysis of explanted implants, tissue and link such information with patient data allowing for both a specific advanced diagnostic and research tribological facility.

During the last 8 years, the NSTC has increased its capacity of training education and research. The overarching aim of our educational programmes is to ensure the healthcare workforce has the right skills, behaviours and training available to support the delivery of excellent healthcare and health improvement. We deliver over 170 courses, each year we have a throughput of 1,000 Consultants, Trainees and Theatre staff. Thanks to the high level of training delivered by our motivated team we’ve gone on to gain an outstanding reputation as a venue that supports the surgical world with unsurpassed regional, national and international educational training courses.

Our team of surgeons, technicians and educational experts are continuing to expand the number of courses on offer. We constantly strive to deliver the best professional development opportunities for the surgical and medical industry, the academic faculty, and of course, the consultants of the future.

We work in parallel with our Industry partners, external agencies identifying key priorities and objectives. We have extended stakeholder engagement and continue to develop working partnerships to ensure seamless working between the NSTC and commissioners.

Developing the Wider Workforce

Key to ensuring we have the right staff with the right skills in the right place to support delivery of high quality patient care and services, at the right time, is the development of new roles and ways of working and training. We pride ourselves at being at the forefront of this in many areas and in the past year alone we have as a Trust (not an exhaustive list), agreed an employment package to support recruitment to hard to recruit to Scientist Training programmes, we have expanded the role of the Teaching Fellows into Postgraduate Medical Education, developed an Orthopaedic Trust Doctor Programme based on the very successful Newcastle Surgical Rotation model, are developing a Newcastle Hospitals Nurse Training Programme in partnership with Sunderland University, actively engaged in development of the North East pilot of the new Nursing Associate role, established Clinical Pharmacists (Primary Care focussed) and worked on the introduction of the Physician Associate role.

However in parallel we must ensure we take care of the needs of our existing workforce and the Trust has a strong track record in developing its staff.

Support Staff (bands 1-4) - We continue to offer a suite of training/development programmes tailored to the needs of this vital part of our workforce and this year has seen an increased focus on the widening participation agenda, the Trust proudly signing the Talent for Care Partnership Pledge in partnership with Staff Side. The Pledge has a number of distinct work streams we have committed to strengthening and we have concentrated our efforts in the following areas this year

- Apprenticeships. The Trust launched its Apprenticeship Programme in April 2016. We are very proud of our programme as it is unique in that it is designed along a number of career pathways helping us grow our own workforce, i.e. Healthcare
As referenced in the Medical Education section a key component of our work this past year has been developing links with schools, universities and colleges in support of the widening widening agenda. There is a separate section on this but one example managed as part of The Pledge is the MAD Mentoring scheme with sessions and careers days being held for young people interested in careers in Medicine and Dentistry.

- Leadership Development, work continues to build leadership capability and capacity at every level of the Trust. A number of mainstream development programmes are available to staff and bespoke development programmes are designed and delivered where teams identify a specific need. An example of such a programme this year is the very successful Customer Service Leadership programme delivered to the Outpatients Admin Team Leaders. Our suite of programmes also includes the ‘Expectations of You as a Leader’ programme and the First Level Leader’s programme.

Continuous Workforce Development (CWD) - We strive to ensure staff have access to the development they need to do their job well and to provide the very best healthcare with a personal touch. Often this requires us to be creative and develop new programmes and new approaches. Here are some of our key highlights in respect of CWD over the past year:

- Our Preceptorship and Nurse Practice Development offer continues to develop and expand to support newly registered practitioners to develop their confidence, refine their skills, values and behaviours and enable them to continue with their learning journey.

- The Trust continues to meet the requirements of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and Health Professionals Council (HPC) in ensuring all pre-registration learners are supported by an appropriately trained registrant, a Mentor or Educator. We are proud of the fact that our placement experiences receive very positive feedback.

- Our internal offer has been mapped to support Nurse Revalidation requirements, and new systems and processes have been put in place to support Nurses in this process.

- Our on-going commitment to the development of Assistant Practitioners remains a key part of our Workforce Development Strategy, this sees the Trust supporting around 20+ staff each year to undertake a Foundation Degree in Healthcare at Teesside University. On completion our staff progress from a Band 3 Healthcare Assistant to a Band 4 Assistant Practitioner.

- As host for the NIHR Local Clinical Research Network for North East and Cumbria, and with our own well established reputation for research and innovation, the Trust continually seeks to develop a body of staff that can undertake and lead clinical research innovation and development, including Clinical Academics. Due to the recently developed Nursing and Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals Research Strategy we have seen an increase in interest in Research posts, secondments and a growing demand for research skills based training and we hope to report more on this next year.

- Many thousands of staff have been supported to undertake CWD at Masters, Degree, and Diploma level or via a modular approach by accessing the Trusts Study Leave process.

- Simulation - Staff have access to training delivered in a simulated training environment providing a safe environment to practice clinical skills but also many of the generic skills and competencies required when working in a (clinical) team. The desired move of the Simulation facility to the new Education Centre at the RVI will provide an opportunity to not only deliver high quality training to our staff but also to deliver programmes to a regional, national and potentially international audience. Programmes for our staff and the wider healthcare workforce now have an increased focus on patient safety and human factors. A very exciting venture is underway between Patient Safety Clinical Leads and the Simulation and Resuscitation Teams to develop a new educational approach centred on the “Deteriorating Patient” pathway. We hope to share our progress with you in the 2016/17 Review of the Year.

- Our aim to foster a “coaching culture” has seen many staff accessing coaching as part of their own development through the internal Coach Network, as part of an internal development programme or through our partnership with the North East Leadership Academy. Staff from across many disciplines have been developed as Internal Coaches and are working as part of the Coach Network to support achievement of this strategic aim.

- This year there has been an increased focus on developing a well and healthy workforce. This has led to development opportunities for staff and managers and has been exceptionally well received. Programmes are continuing and a pilot of the Mental Health First Aider Training programme is planned for later this year.

- This year we have introduced the concept of “inter professional learning” on a broader basis and there is keen interest to take this forward. An Inter professional learning steering group is in the process of being established. Again an exciting development and one which can and will improve patient care. An update will be provided in the 2016/17 Review of the Year.
A key workforce objective remains our intent to strengthen the Trust’s value and reputation as a leading teaching hospital and as a centre for excellence in providing high quality education and training.

Collaborative and Partnership Working – Learning Together

We have continued to develop existing relationships and seek out new opportunities for joint working and collaboration with colleagues in Primary Care, Further and Higher Education, the North East Leadership Academy and the Deanery to ensure effective utilisation of resources, an integrated approach to service and education commissioning, delivery of training and education along the patient pathway (where organisational boundaries can challenge practitioners to work together easily) and to ensure that research and innovation is reflected in training provision. Furthermore for the very same reasons we have been challenging ourselves as to how we can better facilitate the “learning together” of staff groups historically trained in professional silos. We have a plan for strengthening our internal approach to inter professional education this year but this section refers to collaboration with external stakeholders.

Examples this year include:-

The Bridges to Learning Project which continues to work with colleagues across the Trust to promote support and provide professional development opportunities for all staff. One of the key objectives of the project is to deliver and develop career pathways for staff within bands 1-4, enhance staff engagement and in doing so widen participation within the Trust, local community and with external Further and Higher Education providers. The Project has improved and strengthened the partnership between the Workers Education Association, Unison, the Open University and the Trust.

In the last year the Bridges Project has supported the development of our staff in the following ways:

- Provision of Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) pertaining to development opportunities and access to education/learning;
- Delivery of Functional Skills Maths and English and ICT qualifications;
- Provision of a number of Continuing Professional Development (referred to as CWD internally) opportunities including Minute Taking, Assertiveness and Confidence Building, Mental Health Awareness, Autism Awareness, Academic Writing Skills, Well-Being Level 1 and Sign Language;
- Staff group specific CPD Conferences, held this year for Health and Social Care Assistants and Occupational Therapy staff;
- Widening Participation, in partnership with Newcastle City Council branch of Unison the Project delivered Autism Awareness;
- Working with the Staff Networks across the North East the Project has held training on Promoting Equality and Tackling Racism in the workplace; and
- Supporting delivery of Vocational Training including the Apprenticeship Programme.

We have continued with the GP Education events, whereby colleagues from the Trust work with colleagues from Primary Care on topics that cut across patient pathways. This rolling calendar of events along with the very long standing GP Club remain a priority of the Trust going forward and this year’s programme is in the process of being developed.

Over the last year we have strengthened our relationship with two local Universities and are working on and/or are exploring opportunities to work with them on new and innovative programmes using a new partnership model.

As part of the Academic Health Science Network the Trust and Newcastle University and other partners are approaching some new activity as a joint venture and our Nurse Training Programme with Sunderland University affords us an opportunity to work with a local HEI that historically we have not worked with on such a large scale.

A recent agreement has led to the Trust with Newcastle University and partner supplying a programme on the contract managed by HEE NE for the development of the North East healthcare workforce and the Newcastle Surgical Training Centre retains its commission to provide surgical skills training to Specialty Trainees on behalf of the HEE NE and specifically the North East Deanery.

A new “business” relationship is developing with Newcastle College and although in its infancy there are a number of exciting ventures being explored.

The Trust is exploring opportunities where it can work in partnership to be a supplier of education and training. We have recently agreed to house the “Newcastle Ultrasound Simulation Centre”. This will enable multi professional, multi-disciplinary teaching to staff across the Region and it will showcase the Trust as a leader in Education excellence.

Celebrating Success

We try to ensure we celebrate the achievements of our learners and this year this has included our staff showcasing their results at presentation and poster events, on a regional and national level and via in house events. These events include the, Nursing and Midwifery Conference, the Education Practice Development Conference, the 2nd Medical Education Event and the Celebration of Success Awards.

It is a real privilege to be a part of their development and to help them celebrate their successes.

Emma Shipley
Head of Education and Workforce Development

Dr John Hanley
Director of Medical Education

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The Staff Social Club, which was first established in the early days of the Freeman Hospital, aims to provide social and recreational facilities for our staff. Being a member of the Staff Social Club offers the benefits of being included in a monthly lottery with a top prize of £1000 as well as the opportunity to buy subsidised tickets for lots of events such as theatre trips, nights away, parties and also the opportunity to join the RVI and Freeman Fitness Centres.

Over the past year we have had 1,086 new members, bringing our total membership to 4,940. As a result of our growing membership, the committee agreed to increase the amount of prize money given away in the monthly SMILE lottery as well as the number of winners. Each month we now give away £3800 split between 15 winners with a top prize of £1000.

With a huge amount of events there is something to suit everyone in the Trust. Whether you are looking for a girly catch up, boy’s weekend away, family day out or just a fun activity for yourself then look no further.

We have had 6,408 people attend our events this year which is a 230% increase upon last year’s numbers of 1,938.

These have included family days out to Whitehouse Farm Morpeth, Beamish, as well as shopping trips to Leeds, York and Edinburgh. A number of trips have been further afield to London, F1 at Silverstone and even Disneyland Paris.

For those looking for an exercise challenge, there have been organised and escorted bike rides as well as access to our Fitness Centres and Go-karting events. Always popular are the Theatre Events, with almost two and a half thousand tickets being sold by us for productions including Annie, Romeo and Juliet Ballet and the Last Tango.

One of our most popular events was the Christmas Party where 500 tickets sold out within 12 minutes! The committee has therefore agreed to double the amount of places for next year’s party to keep up with demand – let’s see how quickly we can sell them this year!

Pub quizzes have also become an established and popular event on the Staff Social Club calendar and this was the basis for a very successful Annual General Meeting in April 2016.

We know that staff work hard in the Trust, and it’s great to be able to make these facilities and subsidised events available to them to help with their “R&R”.

For more information visit www.benefitseveryone.co.uk/staff-social-club/ or search ‘Staff Social Club’ on google.
As a result of our growing membership, the Committee agreed to increase the amount of prize money given away in the monthly SMILE lottery as well as the number of winners.
The organisation
About NHS Foundation Trusts

NHS Foundation Trusts are at the very heart of a healthcare system which is responsive both to the needs of the patient and the wishes of the local community. They have significant freedoms. While they remain public institutions, NHS Foundation Trusts are not subject to direction by the Secretary of State or the performance management requirements of the Department of Health. They set their own strategies and make their own decisions within the framework of their contracts with their commissioners. They have an independent Council of Governors which appoints the Chairman and other Non-Executive Directors, and which also approves the appointment of the Chief Executive. They can borrow commercially, retain surpluses and invest to serve local needs.

These freedoms create a significant opportunity to continue to reshape and improve the delivery of healthcare in England. NHS Foundation Trusts can invest in new patient care facilities, enter partnerships with other providers to improve care pathways, or develop long term care facilities. They can form partnerships with the private sector, alliances with other hospitals or specialise in selected services. They can acquire or merge with other service providers. They can also innovate and bring to England models of care that have worked in other countries. They can set local targets in consultation with their members or in contracts with commissioners. In all of these areas, NHS Foundation Trusts are free to determine how they can most effectively improve patient services through innovation, investment and engagement locally with key stakeholders.

However such freedoms also carry important responsibilities. The Board of Directors of each NHS Foundation Trust is accountable for its success or failure. They must ensure that their Trust operates effectively, efficiently and economically. While NHS Foundation Trusts can retain surpluses, they can also fail. Indeed, 2015/16 saw a number of FTs fall into “special measures”, often in consequence of financial shortcomings.

Monitor’s Risk Assessment Framework is designed to enable NHS Foundation Trusts to innovate, respond to local wishes and provide better healthcare. Monitor seeks to maintain an environment conducive to innovation by focusing on providing a regulatory platform that ensures NHS Foundation Trusts maintain their viability: staying solvent, governing themselves effectively within their Constitution, engaging with patients, service users and commissioners, providing all the services that they are required to deliver by law, and complying with the other conditions set out in their Licence.

The regulatory approach is changing, and moving away from the previous proportionate approach. NHS Foundation Trusts are experiencing an increasing number of requests for additional information, regardless of whether such foundation trusts are successful or failing. Where NHS Foundation Trusts are experiencing major financial or service problems, oversight is more intensive and Monitor can intervene rapidly to ensure services to patients are safeguarded. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 gave Monitor extensive powers to intervene in the event that an NHS Foundation Trust was failing to comply with its Licence. Regrettably, the past year saw an increased number of such occurrences.

Effective self-governance is therefore essential. The Board takes primary responsibility for compliance with the Licence. The Chairman of an NHS Foundation Trust ensures that the Board monitors the performance of the Trust in an effective way and satisfies itself that appropriate action is taken to remedy problems as they arise. The Risk Assessment Framework is largely aimed at satisfying Monitor that Boards and Chairs are receiving independent assurance where appropriate and are discharging their responsibilities effectively.

In contrast, Councils of Governors are expected to focus less on compliance and more on two vital areas: holding the Board to account, through the Non-Executive Directors; and ensuring that NHS Foundation Trusts respond to the needs and preferences of stakeholders, especially local communities. Governors’ statutory roles include:

- Appointing, removing and deciding the terms of office of the Chair and other Non-Executive Directors, and approving the appointment of the Chief Executive;
- Appointing and removing the Auditor;
Reviewing the Annual Accounts, Auditor’s Report and Annual Report at a General Meeting; and
• Expressing a view on the Board’s Annual Plans for the NHS Foundation Trust.

Monitor now embraced within the organisational envelope of a grouping known as NHS Improvement expects that NHS Foundation Trusts, and their stakeholders as represented through the Council of Governors and other mechanisms, set their own aspirations for innovation, including determining the balance between investment in current provision and innovation through the development of new services.

**Licensing providers**

**The main duty is to protect and promote the interests of people who use health care services.**

This is undertaken by promoting the provision of health care services which is effective, efficient and economic, and maintains or improves the quality of services. The NHS provider licence is the main tool for regulating providers of NHS services.

The licence contains obligations for providers of NHS services that allow Monitor (inter alia NHS Improvement) to:

- set prices for NHS-funded care in partnership with NHS England;
- enable integrated care;
- safeguard choice and prevent anti-competitive behaviour which is against the interests of patients;
- support commissioners to protect essential health services for patients if a provider gets into financial difficulties; and
- oversee the way that NHS Foundation Trusts are governed.

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 requires everyone who provides an NHS health care service to hold a licence unless they are exempt under regulations made by the Department of Health.

**Enforcing the licence**

Monitor (inter alia NHS Improvement) has a range of powers to ensure that providers comply with their licence conditions. These powers include being able to ask providers to set out how they will go about addressing areas that did not comply, and allow action to be taken when the respective provider fails to meet their licence conditions. Further action can be take to step in to NHS Foundation Trusts and remove the Chairman, Chief Executive or entire Board in ‘extreme circumstances’.

NHS Foundation Trusts are free to determine how they can most effectively improve patient services through innovation, investment and engagement locally with key stakeholders.
Governors’ Working Groups

The Governors of the Trust have the specific role, both as individuals and as the full Council of Governors, to hold the Board of Directors to account through the Non-Executive Directors for its planning and delivery of patient services and for maintaining financial strength and organisational sustainability.

Not only do Governors bring their own skills and experience to this role but, in the process of fulfilling their responsibilities, they are informed by the views and opinions of the Trust members whom they represent. The Governors are, then, able to assist the Executive through contributing to strategic thinking, advice and through monitoring of service delivery.

Carrying out such a role requires an understanding of a complex and sophisticated business, the commitment to its purpose and core values and time and energy. The Governors’ Working Groups exist to enable Governors to carry out this role.

The Governors’ Working Groups
All elected Governors may be members of a Working Group, of which there are four:
• Business Development Group;
• Quality of Patient Experience Group;
• Community Engagement and Membership Group;
• Nominations Committee (Staff Governors may not sit on this committee).

The Business Development Group
The aim and objectives of this Group focus on ensuring that the Board takes appropriate action on direction, purpose and financial strength to maintain future sustainability.

The scope of its work covers the scrutiny of operational issues by means of contribution to the strategic three year business plan, monitoring of the achievement of the previous year’s operational plan and communication of plan priorities to Members and gaining views for future plans, along with scrutiny of financial performance reports, examination of the final accounts and receipt of the external auditors’ management letter.

This Group also holds the statutory responsibility of recommending to the Council of Governors the appointment or removal of the external auditor, which it carries out in full, along with the Chairman of the Trust’s Audit Committee.

The Quality of Patient Experience Group
The aim and objectives of this Group centre around ensuring that the Board maintains the highest level of quality in patient care through achieving targets in areas such as infection prevention and control, safety and service improvement and in striving to improve the quality of patient experience.

The Group works on closely monitoring patient experience on selected wards, through visits to wards and departments, analysis of information from sources such as complaints, progressing specific quality-based projects, and regularly scrutinising the Trust’s Quality Account.

The Community Engagement and Membership Group
This Group’s aim and objectives are based on representing, understanding and responding to the needs of Members, the public and users, all of which are essential to the successful work of all Governors. The Group contributes to ensuring that Members are aware of the Trust’s services and to obtaining their views on those services.

Work also covers building external links with existing bodies, forging relationships and encouraging Governor/Member two way communication, mounting Member engagement events, and contributing to the Members’ Newsletter. It is also involved in supporting the Trust in growing and strengthening the Membership base.

The Nominations Committee
Governors have a statutory responsibility not only to appoint (and potentially remove) the external auditor but also to recommend the appointment (and potential removal) of the Non-Executive Directors of the Trust, including the Chairman.

The Nominations Committee aims and objectives are related to sourcing and recruiting the most suitable candidates for the role. Members of the Committee are involved in the full recruitment process and establish the conditions of appointment for each Non-Executive Director. In conjunction with the Senior Independent Director in the case of the Chairman and the Chairman and Board in the case of other NEDs, they then play a significant part in the annual assessment s of NED performance.

The four Group Chairmen coordinate the work of the Groups, which cooperate together on certain activities, and the full Council is made aware of and is able to debate and comment on matters before any decision or resolution is made. Governors are thus enabled, both individually and as a Council, to hold the Board of Directors to account.
### ROYAL VICTORIA INFIRARY, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

**REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1915.**

The House Committee of the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, have pleasure in presenting to the Governors the one hundred and sixty-sixth Annual Report of the Institution.

#### ANALYSIS OF STATISTICAL TABLES, 1914-1915.

The year 1915 has been distinguished by high prices and new expenses.

#### IN-PATIENTS

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<th>Civilian Patients</th>
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<th>Total for Year</th>
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### INCOME

#### 1914

- Annual Subs...: 8,230 11 0
- Disclosure Fees: 1,530 1 10
- Medical Charities: 1,090 6 10
- Trade Union Fees: 1,390 12 10
- Miscellaneous: 1,090 6 10

#### 1915

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- Disclosure Fees: 1,530 1 10
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### EXPENSES

#### 1914

- Total Ordinary: 45,290 10 9
- Extra Ordinary: 1,090 6 10
- Insurance: 7,250 4 12
- Expenses: 52,630 18 18

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### His Majesty King George V. visited the Infirmary on Thursday, the 20th May, 1915, with the object of seeing the provision for the reception of wounded soldiers from the Expeditionary Forces. His Majesty was accompanied by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, the Officer in Command of the 1st Northern General Hospital, and other Officers from the Headquarters, York. By command of His Majesty, there were present, representing the Infirmary, the Chairman, the House Governor and the Matron. His Majesty visited Wards Nos. 5 and 6, and 6a. During the circuit of the Wards His Majesty conversed with several of the wounded soldiers. Before leaving His Majesty entered his name in the Visitors' Book. His Majesty expressed his satisfaction with the arrangements, and his gratification at visiting the Infirmary.
Patient, Carer and Public Involvement

The Trust is committed to involving patient, carers and the public at all levels in order to ensure that services are planned around the needs of patients and that year on year improvements in the patient experience are achieved.

This year saw the continuation of the work of our Patient, Carer and Public Involvement Strategy and Plan which covered objectives, actions and outcomes to achieve individual and collective involvement at three levels:
1. Information provision;
2. Feedback on Trust services; and
3. Influencing planning and decisions about services.

In 2015-16, key achievements in support of the patient, carer and public involvement agenda included:

- A focus on providing feedback to patients, carers and visitors about the changes made as a result of feedback using ‘You said… We did’ boards at each main entrance.
- Embedding the NHS Friends and Family Test within all services to enable all patients to have the opportunity to take part in the survey. This meant that from 1 April 2015 all patients using NHS services have the opportunity to answer the Friends and Family Test question (‘How likely are you to recommend our ward/ Emergency Department/service to friends and family if they needed similar care or treatment?’). An Infographic has been developed to summarise the results published each month.
- Co-ordination of the Trust’s continued inclusion in the National Patient Survey Programme. The programme for 2015-16 included the annual survey of Elective and Non-elective Inpatients and a survey of Maternity patients.
- The completion of a ‘Thinksafe’ pilot within Newcastle University and other Trusts in the area. The project focused on patients admitted for elective surgery at Freeman Hospital. All patients reviewed in the major pre assessment clinic prior to proposed surgery were introduced to the concept of ThinkSafe and a log book was offered to all patients during the pilot period.
- Going out to the communities that we serve to hear their experiences of using Trust services and to highlight the work that we do.
- Continuing to support and listen to our well-established Community Advisory Panel. As well as being involved in a number of activities, the Panel also hear from staff about new developments and offer the patient perspective on initiatives.
- The Trust publishing ‘Open and Honest Care’ reports on our website. The Open and Honest Care Programme, led by NHS England aims to support organisations to become more transparent and consistent in publishing safety, experience and improvement data; with the overall aim of improving care, practice and culture.
- In response to patient feedback, the Trust launched its commitment to the #Hello my name is campaign at the Nursing and Midwifery Conference in May 2015. All staff are reminded at induction and every other opportunity of the importance of introducing themselves to patients and carers whenever they meet.

Understanding the patient experience through the feedback obtained in the Trust

In order to gain an understanding of the key issues and themes surrounding the patient experience, information from various feedback mechanisms is collected on a Patient Experience Database. This includes feedback from the following mechanisms:
- Free text comments from the Friends and Family Test;
- Details of Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) contacts;
- Details of Complaints received;
- Comments and Suggestions made on the ‘Take 2 Minutes’ forms in public areas of the Trust; and
- Comments placed on the NHS Choices, Patient Opinion and local Healthwatch websites.

This patient experience feedback is reviewed by the Patient Experience Steering Group and the Patient, Carer and Public Involvement (PCPI) Group and circulated to directorate managers and heads of department for information, sharing, action and feedback where applicable.

In 2015-16, the Trust received around 39,000 comments from the people who use our services. A number of actions to improve the patient experience have been implemented or continued during 2015/16. These include:
- The development of the Trust’s commitment to Carers in collaboration with Newcastle Carers Centre, Barnados Young Carers and Newcastle City Council. We display ‘Carers are Welcome’ posters on each Ward and provide a Carers Information Pack which provide advice and signposting information.
- Patient-Led Assessments of the Care Environment involving service users and patient representatives.
- The development of specific patient information leaflets following issues raised by service users who identified gaps in the information provided. In addition we are reviewing the information provided to all patients who are coming to hospital for an inpatient stay or outpatient appointment.
- A review of the car parking concessions and payment systems available across the Trust with the aim of making concessions clear and consistent for all patient and visitor groups.
The Year Ahead

In 2016-17 we shall conclude the work of Patient, Carer and Public Involvement Strategy. This involves in particular:

• Actively seek further opportunities to meet with existing community groups to listen and respond to feedback about the Trust and to raise the profile of the services we provide.

• Continuing to support and be involved in the work of Healthwatch Newcastle and build working relationships with other local Healthwatch organisations.

• Continuing to support the use of the Friends and Family Test into all NHS Services by promoting the opportunity for patients to give their feedback and addressing the issues raised by patients and carers. Respond to the feedback that we receive.

• Ensuring that we display the actions that we take in response to patient feedback so it is clear that the Trust values this feedback and uses all opportunities available to improve the patient experience.

In addition, the National Patient Survey Plan for 2015-16 includes:

- Annual survey of Adult Elective and Non-Elective Inpatients
- National Patient Survey of Emergency Department Patients
- A National Survey of Children and Young People Inpatient and Day Cases.