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Welcome

Welcome to the latest issue of Shine. In this edition we focus on ordinary people doing amazing things which in the NHS is most often, every day. We find out how we can keep our bodies healthy whilst adjusting to different working patterns and discover helpful and simple tips for meditation. We hear from our new, international nursing recruits about their hopes and dreams and from our Director of Partnerships as he looks back on his powerful career journey. Our community partners, Creative Advances speak about the importance of the safe disposal of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for our planet and we also take a look at how the people in Solent have played such an important role in the largest vaccination programme the NHS has ever seen. We hope you enjoy and as ever, please do let us know what you think of this issue, or of any ideas you might have for further editions – communications@solent.nhs.uk



From our Chief Executive

These past months have presented us with more difficulty and challenges, however the people in Team Solent continue to show incredible dedication and compassion despite these challenges. Our teams continue to adapt and most are still working differently, they have had to settle into new teams, with new people, and are learning new skills - I am so proud of everyone in Team Solent and want to thank everyone for all that they do.

Since the start of the year, the trust has also played a huge part in vaccinating the people in our communities and also our colleagues across the health and social care sector - so much has been achieved in such a short period of time, by our employees and all the volunteers working across Solent and in the vaccination centres.

As ever, it's really important that we are doing everything we can to keep each other safe and well - this also applies to our mental health and wellbeing, and I hope reading this new and inspiring issue of Shine will prompt you to have some time to reflect and recharge.

Sue Harriman

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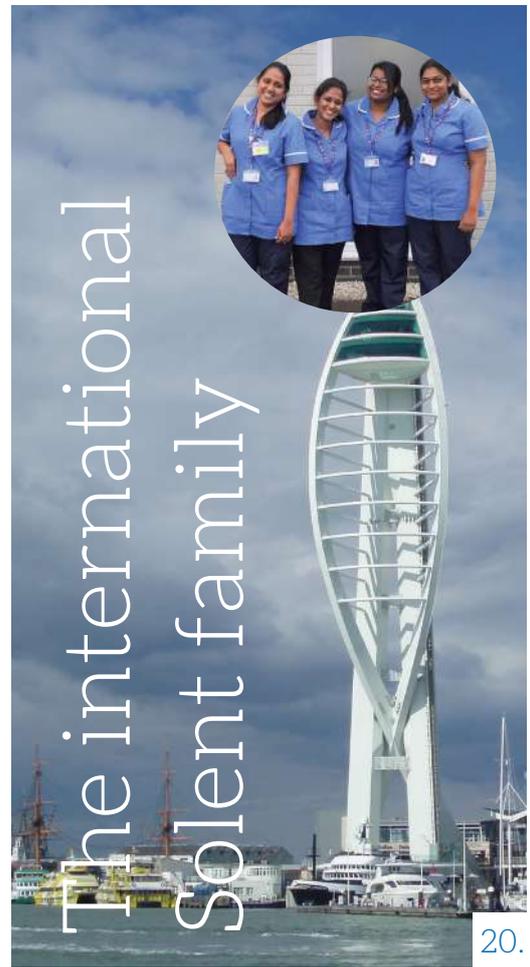
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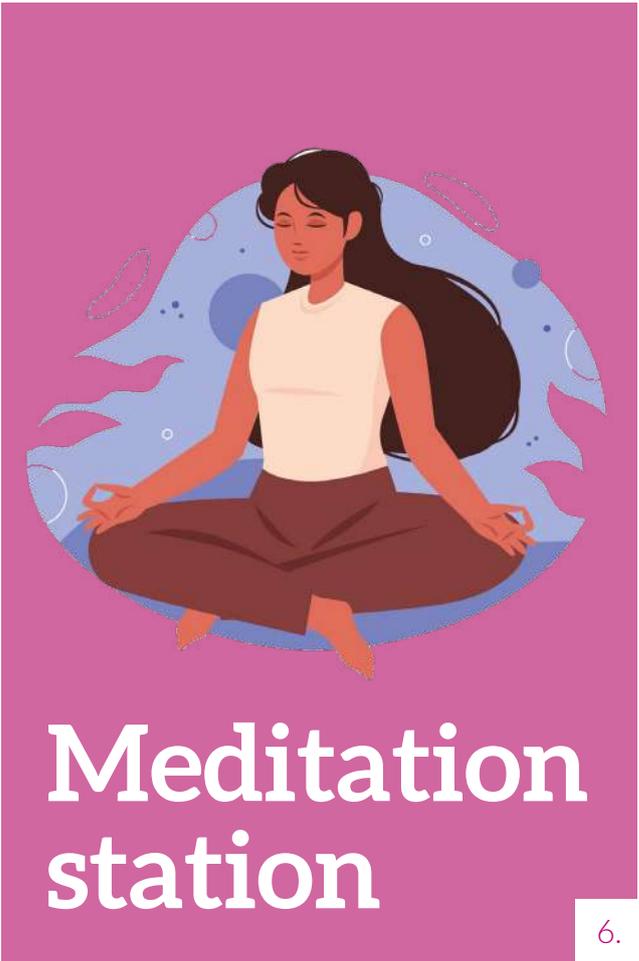
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Noticeboard

Take a peek at the exciting things that have been happening around Solent NHS Trust!

Wellbeing gardens

Funded by NHS Charities Together and through donations kindly raised by Sir Captain Tom Moore, two wellbeing gardens have been created for staff at both the Western Community Hospital and St Mary's Community Health Campus.

The gardens provide staff with a space to reflect and recharge. To make the gardens look extra-special, we enlisted the help of the 3rd Test Guide group who came up with their own rainbow and hearts design for the new garden area, situated near the entrance to Adelaide Health Centre. They spend two evenings preparing and then planting a border full of colourful bedding plants along with sunflowers, with the hope of attracting bees!



Two Solent NHS Trust nurses awarded the title of Queen's Nurse

Lucy Parker, Childrens Community Nursing Clinical Matron, and Angela Anderson, Associate Nurse Director, were given the prestigious

award by the Queen's Nursing Institute for demonstrating a high level of commitment to patient care and nursing practice – a fantastic achievement and we feel very lucky to have both Angela and Lucy here at Solent!



10 years of Solent NHS Trust

Earlier this year we celebrated the 10th birthday of Solent NHS Trust. What a great achievement, thank you to everyone in Team Solent, past and present, for your commitment and dedication over the past decade. Here's to a continued bright future!



Volunteers Week

1-7 June was National Volunteers' Week and we've used the opportunity to showcase the brilliant work of our volunteers across Hampshire and the IOW. Most recently we have welcomed over 2,000 volunteers to our vaccination programme.

We are incredibly grateful to our volunteer workforce. If you'd like to make a difference to Solent as a volunteer please visit recruitment.solent.nhs.uk/your-career/volunteers for more information.



The best posture is your next posture

We spoke to our Occupational Health team about how we can keep our bodies healthy at home and at work



Vector created by pch.vector - www.freepik.com

At work we often stay in one position for long periods of time, regularly at a desk. However, the pandemic has shifted the way in which some of us might go about our daily routines, and as a result more people will be working from a range of locations - like the sofa or kitchen table. This is when we need to be proactive and preventative in our approach to wellbeing at work, whether you are at home or at the office. The two are closely linked - looking after our wellbeing will enable us to be more productive at work and at home, helping us to care for ourselves and our loved ones.

Our bodies are designed to move. When we are sitting for long periods of time it can lead to muscles and joints feeling tired and uncomfortable. Even though some jobs might not entail much movement during the day, we still need to try our best to get moving.

If you notice yourself becoming accustomed to minimal movement, maybe ask yourself, when else would I do that? The cinema or a long flight? We would not ask our bodies to stay still every day, so movement is key - whatever form it may be. The best posture is your next posture!

What movements should I do?

Do more of what you love. Get up, walk around, dance, do some squats or yoga. Give yourself permission and just move. Choose your favourite stretches, karate positions, leg exercises, anything and everything goes!

How often should I move?

You should move for five minutes, every 45 minutes. However, listen to your body. We often only hear our body when it shouts "please get up my back hurts" and we often reply by

saying "OK let me just finish this email!" – try to shift your perspective and take action as soon as you spot the signs.

Planning breaks

When planning breaks, think about what is going to stop you taking them? Is it a meeting or a deadline? Once you know when the best time is, make sure you seize the opportunity and move! If you have trouble sticking to your movement goals, try blocking time in your diary or setting a reminder on your phone to prompt you to take a break.

Helpful tips to get moving more everyday

- Learn to break up tasks and use the break to stand up for a while; variety helps our bodies recover
- Take a lunch break away from your work area, this is also important for eye health
- Keep your working zone within easy reach and minimise awkward postures. Try to use a supportive chair and keep screens at eye level
- Take time to rest and rehydrate; short frequent breaks are more helpful than one long break
- Recognise discomfort early and act – maybe go for a short walk, try some yoga or do some stretches in your chair

You can contact our Occupational Health team for more information on healthy lifestyles.
ohservices@solent.nhs.uk

Meditation station



www.freepik.com

We live in a world that thrives off being busy, filled with distractions and information that can overload us, making it difficult to switch off and disconnect. We need quiet time in our lives; slowing down your body and mind gives a welcome stress break and allows you to reset.

Many people don't think they have the skills, patience, or the time to meditate, but with some guidance, anyone can do it. When we meditate, we inject far-reaching and long-lasting benefits into our lives. We lower our stress levels, we get to know our pain, we connect better, we improve our focus, and we're kinder to ourselves. More and more studies are proving the huge benefits of mindful meditation – especially with stress management and anxiety.

By deliberately focusing our attention, we truly experience and live in the present. By meditating for just 10-15 minutes a day (the key is to commit every day) you will experience some of the benefits. Meditation is not about forcing the mind to be still, rather, it's a letting go of resistance to whatever comes up.

“The mind is definitely something that can be transformed, and meditation is a means to transform it” – Dalai Lama

Mindfulness is about noticing when your mind wanders and gently refocusing. If your mind wanders and you realise this, you are practising mindfulness. Acknowledge whatever thoughts come into your head and let them go. Come back to your breath when you feel the need to refocus.

Here are some easy to follow steps to start your meditation journey

- Take a seat - Find a place to sit that feels calm and quiet to you.
- Set a time limit - If you're just beginning, it can help to choose a short time, such as five or 10 minutes.

- Notice your body - You can sit in a chair with your feet on the floor, you can sit loosely cross-legged, you can kneel - all are fine.
- Feel your breath - Follow the sensation of your breath as it goes in and goes out.
- Notice when your mind has wandered - Inevitably, your attention will leave the breath and wander to other places. When you notice this simply return your attention to the breath.
- Be kind to your wandering mind - Don't judge yourself or obsess over the content of the thoughts you find yourself lost in. Just come back.
- Close with kindness - When you're ready, gently lift your gaze (if your eyes are closed, open them). Take a moment and notice any sounds in the environment. Notice how your body feels right now. Notice your thoughts, sensations and emotions.

It's important to let yourself feel whatever you need to feel. This is time just for you, time to just be. Now take a breath... and exhale.

**Check out these websites:
headspace.com or calm.com and
mindful.org for more information
and guidance**

Creating a positive culture around mental health

Fungayi's Story

At Solent we are committed to creating an environment where our employees feel supported with their mental health and wellbeing.



We introduced Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training in Solent in July 2020 to help improve mental health services being offered within the workplace. Since its inception, the trust has trained over 60 staff. MHFA is an in-depth course which teaches people how to identify, understand, and help someone who may be experiencing a mental health issue, giving them the skills to look after their own, and other people's, wellbeing.

Fungayi Zinyemba, Clinical Team Coordinator, has a background in mental health as a health visitor, so when he saw the opportunity to become a Mental Health First Aider, it was a natural choice.

Fungayi says, "MHFA gave me the confidence to approach somebody if I can see something is wrong, rather than wait for them to come to me as a manager. As a Mental Health First Aider I can spot when someone is feeling a bit down and I can approach them, offering a listening ear. You are not there to diagnose; just to support and to possibly signpost to relevant services that are available to help.

"Being a Mental Health First Aider helps to remove the stigma around mental health in the workplace. People don't always want to talk about how they are feeling, or if they are experiencing mental health problems. But supporting staff internally offers them an opportunity to express how they are feeling instead of going to a professional. You become that first port of call."

Involved in the training, Hetty Thomson, Wellbeing Practitioner and MHFA Trainer at Solent, says MHFA training

helps to create an open culture within the Trust and allows people to bring their whole selves to work.

"MHFA training ensures people can have an open conversation with someone, either to prevent poor mental health from developing or worsening. As a Mental Health First Aider, it gives you more knowledge on how to support a colleague, family member or friend if they are struggling with their mental health," says Hetty.

Fungayi wants to help towards breaking the stigma around mental health. Being a Mental Health First Aider offers him the opportunity to do that. Fungayi adds, "I have learnt how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health and develop the skills and confidence to approach and support someone. MHFA doesn't train you to be a therapist, but it teaches you to listen, reassure and respond, even in a crisis – and even potentially stop a crisis from happening.

"You also learn how to empower someone to access the support they might need for recovery or successful management of symptoms. This could include self-help books or websites, accessing therapy services through their GP, school or place of work, online self-referral, support groups, and more. What's more, you'll gain an understanding of how to support positive wellbeing and tackle stigma in the world around you."

If you work at Solent NHS Trust and would like to train as an MHFA, helping to support others email the Occupational Health and Wellbeing team at ohservices@solent.nhs.uk.

Vials of hope

Many of us would have felt the devastating effects of the pandemic – lockdowns, being separated from family, friends, colleagues, losing loved ones and life in general being put on pause – desperately hoping for a solution.

By the time December came however, we were a step closer, the first COVID-19 vaccination was approved for use in the UK, and this is where our journey in the biggest vaccination programme the NHS has ever seen, began.

Solent NHS Trust, along with our partner organisations across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, has been heavily involved in the delivery of these life-changing vaccines, offering them to all those eligible in our communities to keep as many people as possible safe and well - starting with our dedicated staff and our colleagues in the health and social care sector. By February, four large-scale vaccination centres were stood up around Hampshire, in Southampton, Portsmouth, Basingstoke and on the Isle of Wight. These beacons of hope have played a crucial part in delivering over half a million vaccinations to the people in our communities so far.

The centres were formed at a rapid pace, thanks to our estates and facilities teams, featuring skilled architects drawing up plans and creating what should aptly be described a ‘sanctuary’ of organisation - a vaccination process that has been dubbed by many people as ‘smooth sailing and painless’.

Our centres and the incredible people working in them, touch hearts and reflect the dedication we see from our communities. The Basingstoke Fire Station Vaccination centre was completely transformed so that people could receive their vaccines whilst the station remained fully functional for the firefighters on duty, a spectacle to be seen. Firefighters were also trained by our teams to give vaccinations.

The success is not only testament to the commitment of the people in Team Solent; from the people who were redeployed to the centres, the training, clinical and admin staff, but also the enormous team of volunteers. The centres have welcomed over 2,000 volunteers with some training to vaccinate and others to help welcome and lend a kind word to people in the queue.

People have come from all walks of life, and even coming out of retirement to help with the cause.

We are so incredibly proud to play our part in the programme and can't thank the people involved enough. It has bought us hope, elation and tears. Enabling the people in our community and their families the chance to protect themselves against the devastating illness that is COVID-19 has been a great honour.

For more information about the COVID-19 Vaccination please visit nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination





A time to shine

Giving our community a platform to share their voice



Every six weeks, a group of adults with learning disabilities take great pride and joy in putting together a newsletter for community organisation, Creative Advances. The group spend these hugely beneficial days discussing the events of the past weeks and deciding what topic to write and report on as part of their work. Faye Dine, Service Manager at Creative Advances, says these meetings are hugely beneficial, both to the community and the participants, as it develops their skills and allows them to take ownership of their work. Faye says, "Their voice needs to be heard. People look at people with disabilities and dismiss their opinion, but they have a good understanding of what is happening in their community and we facilitate them to express their opinion."

The budding 'press' group at Creative Advances have creatively written a story on face masks for sharing in this issue of Shine magazine. After researching, setting up and conducting interviews, this is their inspiring and informative article on the effects masks can have on our environment.

Masking the planet

Due to COVID-19 the majority of the world has been advised to wear a face covering. Single use disposable face masks, although good at keeping us safe, have had a big impact on the environment. The Environmental Journal did a survey of 2000 people to see how many wore disposable masks. Their results showed 51% wore this type of mask. They used these results to estimate how many people used single use masks in the UK.

Their estimated number is 26.7 million. Assuming these people wore two masks a day this would mean 54.5 million single use disposable masks are used every day in the UK, these masks are made of plastics, so they are not biodegradable or recyclable.

This means they all end up in landfill. This is bad because each takes over 20 years to break down. Any single use masks that are not responsibly disposed of ends up in our streets or in our oceans and rivers. This has a massive impact on our wildlife and crops, the animals are mistaking the masks for food or getting tangled up in them and causing them injury.

RSPCA urge people to snip the straps off their disposable face masks, as it has been revealed that more than 900 animals have been caught in litter since lockdown started on March 23, 2020.

Chris Sherwood, the RSPCA Chief Executive, said, "Animals are susceptible to getting tangled in face masks. We're concerned discarded face masks could become a significant hazard, particularly to wild animals and birds."

Reusable ones are good because you can wash them again instead of throwing them away and save money. Compostable ones are good because once used you can put them on your compost heap and turn it into plant food! These are made of bamboo, wood fibres, coffee, and hemp. If you can, buy reusable face masks and save the planet.

Creative Advances is a community organisation that provides services for adults and young people with a learning disability and/or Autism and associated conditions in the Portsmouth area. Services provided range from day care, outreach activities, trainings, and supported living. For more information please visit creative-advances.co.uk

In some circumstances it is necessary to wear single use, clinical face masks, for instance in a clinical setting.





ordinary
people doing
amazing
things

Volunteer your gifts,
time, knowledge and experience

You'll be making a real difference to our
local community and mental health services

We want to hear from people who reflect the rich diversity of our community



FIND OUT MORE

Volunteers@solent.nhs.uk

0300 123 3390

#SolentDifference

Life and Long COVID



This is the story of Nigel who spent almost two months in an induced coma

In October last year, Nigel Bowes, 63, from Portsmouth was very unwell with COVID-19 and struggling to breathe. He was admitted to Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth where he stayed for 77 days. A husband, father, grandfather and sports enthusiast, Nigel went from leading a normal and active life to fighting for it, on a ventilator. It would be seven weeks before he opened his eyes and started his road to recovery.

Thinking back, Nigel remembers how worried his family were and how scared he was, especially when he woke up after being on a ventilator for so long: "I was unable to lift my arm or even sit up."

Nigel spent almost four weeks in the Intensive Therapy Unit (ITU) working with the physiotherapists to get him more mobile and to build up his strength. Within 10 days, he could stand and after two weeks he was able to walk a short distance without aid. When he was able to walk up a flight of stairs, Nigel was discharged to the care of our Solent NHS Trust community physiotherapy (MSK) team. Nigel is so thankful to the all the staff across the NHS who helped him regain his strength and who really looked after him when he was at his most vulnerable. "The NHS have been fantastic from when I was first admitted to when I was sent to ITU for rehabilitation after coming off the ventilator, to the community nursing I received at home to help with my recovery." Nigel's care is testament to the partnership working that happens across NHS organisations every day.

Now suffering from long COVID, also referred to as the long-term effects of COVID-19, Nigel says his main symptoms are anxiety, brain fog and fatigue. We are at the very beginning of understanding the effects of the disease, but research is constantly developing. Solent NHS Trust is working with NHS England and partners Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust

and have set-up long COVID clinics to support people with their recovery.

"Long COVID has impacted my stamina and mobility. The fatigue is the worst. It is frustrating because I can't do what I used to, like hockey coaching. I was used to being active and lived a very healthy life. Now I get tired after an hour of housework. But, with therapy and the support I receive from the community teams at Solent NHS Trust I am getting better every day."

After leaving hospital Nigel was referred to Ashley Rowlands, a Physiotherapist who is based at St Mary's Community Health Campus in Portsmouth. Ashley is very happy with the progress Nigel has made in their six weeks of intensive physical therapy at his home. "When we first started therapy, Nigel had very low muscle tone and his lung capacity was also low. We started with 15-20 minutes sessions due to low energy levels which we built up to 30 minutes as he improved.

"His muscle power and control have now increased tremendously, and his lung capacity has improved significantly. In the beginning he was unable to do small tasks like opening a bottle of milk or walking up the stairs, but now he can perform tasks for longer without becoming short of breath so quickly. It's effectively like learning how to walk again."

Nigel is now able to follow the exercises and the physical therapy plan Ashley put together for him on his own and he is excited to get back to his active lifestyle and back into coaching. He said, "the support from the team in and out of hospital and with Ashley has been amazing and they push you just hard enough to get that balance back, so you have confidence to get back out there."



Nigel's goal now is to get back to coaching hockey and he is looking forward to doing his first official coaching session this year thanks to the progress he has made with the support of the teams across the NHS.

Nigel is not alone in his struggles with long COVID. In the most recent data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS), around 1 million people in the UK are experiencing Long COVID*. Emerging evidence and patient testimony are showing a growing number of people who contract COVID-19 cannot shake off the effects of the virus months after initially falling ill. Symptoms are wide-ranging and fluctuating, and can include breathlessness, chronic fatigue, "brain fog", anxiety and stress. However, many patients recover with support, rest, symptomatic treatment, and with a gradual increase in physical activity.

It has been a long road to recovery for Nigel, but he is hopeful with each day as he sees the results of the therapy and his hard work paying off: "I've always had a positive outlook but now even more so as I have been given a second chance."

Anyone experiencing symptoms of long COVID are advised to visit yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk for more information and if symptoms persist, to contact their GP or health care professional.

*<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/>



Managing medicines and more...



The Medicines Advice at Home Team are based at St Mary's Community Health Campus in Portsmouth.

The small team of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians work together to carry out vital home visits in the local community supporting vulnerable patients with complex medication needs or people who need extra support with medicines, such as the elderly, patients with dementia or mobility issues, and patients with mental health issues. The team work closely with GPs, community pharmacies and our colleagues in health and social care.

"The patients are the most important thing to us," says Jenny Winfield, Team Lead, and overwhelmingly, team members agree that seeing patients is the most enjoyable aspect of their role. "These patients are often, but not always, reliant on complex prescriptions and are normally housebound or unlikely to access support to help them with their medicines - this is where we come in. We visit the home to assess medication needs and identify issues that prevent the patient taking their medicines as prescribed. The team offers tailored support to ensure patients have exactly what they need to manage and then we discharge them so they can continue with their daily lives as independently as possible."

"We can spot issues and sometimes rectify this with some simple solutions" says Sarah Newman, Pharmacy Technician. "Some patients might be on a repeat order for a particular medicine, but might not be taking it as they don't like the taste, or they find it hard to swallow. We can often pick up on this and work to offer them an alternative that works for them, so that they can take the right steps to keep themselves healthy."

Jenny continues "As a team, we often simplify complex medication regimens. For example, one patient was not managing and overdosing on his medication. He lives alone and does not have carers. The team were able to set up an electronic alarmed device which prevents overdosing and he is now doing well. This in turn prevented admission to hospital and the patient can remain happy at home, which is where he wants to be."

During the pandemic, the Medicines Advice at Home team had to adapt to new ways of working and underwent significant changes to do this. Despite the changes, they continued to do their best for the people they care for, keeping them safe, well and happy at home.

When COVID-19 hit and the first national lockdown started, most visits ceased, the team worked from home and were only able to visit a small number of urgent patients. "Instead of going into patients' homes we had to get our information in other ways, but we did everything we could to help," adds Jenny. "We provided support to other teams, including the wider Solent pharmacy team and sourcing medicines for other services and partners, like our colleagues in health and social care."



Jenny says, "It was really hard not having face to face contact. It's very easy for people to say they are ok on face value, when they are struggling and some just don't realise that they are not managing to take their medicines as intended. When restrictions were lifted sufficiently towards the end of last summer, we started to follow up with patients who had been supported, but had not been seen by us and gradually got back to doing our normal service, which feels great, not only for us but for our patients too."

And it's not just medicines that the team work hard to promote; expert care and attention for other areas of the patients' lives is also on hand.

"We see the bigger picture", says Pharmacist, Ola Labib. "By going into the home, we build a relationship with the patient and can often spot other things that might be affecting their health. This means

we can put wheels in motion and signpost them to other community services to offer additional support.

"For example, we might visit a patient with Parkinson's or heart failure whose condition has deteriorated and we can refer to the specialist nurses to review. Or, we might see a patient who has developed swallowing problems, so we can flag to our speech and language teams and ask them to come and assess the patient before the patient puts themselves in danger. It's what makes us unique as a team."

Every day the teams within Solent go above and beyond to ensure we deliver the greatest care, and the Medicines at Home Team are a prime example.

Jenny finishes, "We are proud to work here, helping patients with their medicines and making sure people have a good quality of life."

“People living with HIV can feel empowered to live a normal, happy and healthy life”



Natalie D'Anna Brown works within the Sexual Health Services for Solent NHS Trust in North Hampshire.

The service provides accessible and confidential Sexual Health Services including contraception, sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and treatment, HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) services, psychosexual counselling and more with clinics based across the South.

Natalie works within the community to provide education and resources to help combat the stigma surrounded by HIV. She is also an advocate for the importance of early testing and how people can manage their wellbeing when living with HIV.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus is a virus that attacks the body's immune system (our natural defence against infection and disease). In late-stage HIV infection the weakened immune system means the body is more vulnerable to life-threatening conditions, such as pneumonia and cancer. In 2019, a total of 98,552 people (around 31% females and 67% males) were seen for HIV care in the UK*.

Natalie says, “There is unfortunately still a stigma attached to HIV which is a real shame as now we have the knowledge and treatments available so people can feel empowered to live a normal, happy and healthy life. Effective treatment means that people living with HIV can have a normal lifespan, improve long term health outcomes, and ensures that they cannot pass the virus on, but it's really important to get diagnosed as early as possible in the infection, which is why early testing is key.”

Since September 2020, it is now mandatory for all secondary schools in England to deliver relationships and sex education (RSE). Natalie adds, “These new RSE lessons will serve as an important role to inform young people about the modern-day knowledge of HIV and how to protect themselves, it will also help to reduce the stigma surrounding HIV.”

A big part of Natalie's role involves working in the community, supporting diverse local groups. Previously Solent NHS Trust hosted a Health and Wellbeing event in Aldershot, in the North of Hampshire. It included various local health organisations and wellbeing services, with members of the Sexual Health team providing HIV resources and offering a safe place for open conversations relating to HIV.

“Making sure we have strong connections in the community is really important so we can ensure the right messages are

out there. We regularly visit churches and community centres, and we're also active on online LGBT+ forums to promote wellbeing and testing in a safe and supportive way,” says Natalie.

“HIV can affect anyone, regardless of gender or sexual behaviour. It is important that people protect themselves against STIs like HIV by using condoms and test themselves regularly.”

Debbie Zimmerman, Head of Sexual Health Services, says many people think HIV only affects certain groups, adding, “this is really detrimental as it leads to negative judgements about people who are living with HIV. We need to make sure we continue to work hard and talk openly about HIV to help normalise the subject. Talking also provides opportunities to correct misconceptions and help others to learn more about the virus.”

Did you know that you don't have to see anyone to get a test and it's free and confidential to request one? You can order a full STI test online, which includes a HIV and Syphilis test.

You can also get tested by visiting a Sexual Health Clinic and at many GP surgeries. To find out more visit our website - letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk

*Source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/959330/hpr2020_hiv19.pdf



Become your own best friend with the Solent Sessions Podcast!

Brought to you by Solent NHS Trust, each episode of the Solent Sessions Podcast provides the opportunity for you to listen in as we explore our minds, chat about lived experiences and hear the powerful stories of real people living real lives.

Join our hosts Dan Winter-Bates and Emily Munns, as they take you through real, raw and sometimes difficult conversations to help raise awareness in the world of wellbeing within Solent and beyond. Episodes include insights into practicing

self-kindness, with special guest and business psychologist and coach, Hazel-Anderson Turner. We also speak all things Nutrition with Hetty Thompson, Wellbeing Practitioner at Solent NHS Trust – there is an episode for everyone!

Listen and download on Spotify, Apple Music, Google Podcasts and Anchor FM now <https://anchor.fm/solent-sessions>



The SOLENT SESSIONS



Becoming your own best friend

Just because you are homeless, doesn't mean there is no hope

Paul works for Homeless Health Care (HCC) as a peer support advocate, supporting people who are homeless. He tells us his powerful story of how he overcame mental health and substance abuse to be part of the Homeless Healthcare team.



Early last year, the Homeless Healthcare team identified that there were issues with patients, who had tested positive for Hepatitis C, in getting their follow-on treatment at hospital. The team decided to set up a project to investigate the reasons why take up of the follow-up treatment was low. After some research they discovered the main stumbling block - some patients, who were homeless, did not have the support to make appointments, or the transport to attend them. This is where the peer support programme started.

Read on to find out more about Paul's story and discover how he took the step to become part of the team that helped him on his own road to recovery.

"I am an ex-alcoholic who'd been drinking for over 35 years. Basically, I wasn't in a place of reality from the age of 17 until I was 52 years old.

"My childhood wasn't easy as I didn't get on with my dad. I don't feel like I was supported as a child, although, I must admit I was a bit of a handful. I didn't really have a career and I ended up working as a labourer. When I was 19, my partner

at the time fell pregnant and when it didn't work out, I went off the rails. Now, when I look back, I realise that there were lots of things I could have done with my life.

"I was homeless for around six weeks' but I've been around the homeless scene all my life. I've been coming to the shelter for about 25 years."

Paul knew he needed to make a positive change and just when he decided to make the steps to improve his lifestyle, he became involved with peer support advocacy for the HHC team after speaking with a fellow team member.

"A former member of staff told me about the project to help homeless people access their hospital appointments. She thought I would be good at assisting people to get to where they needed to be and also offering support, so they can get better. So, I took the plunge and I wanted to give back to the centre. I had to have six weeks of robust training with consultants and further training and shadowing with Groundswell in London, to enable me to start my role. Groundswell are an organisation who work with people experiencing homelessness. They offer opportunities for people who are homeless to be able to contribute to society and create solutions to homelessness in the UK.

"My first success story was by sheer accident. One morning, I arrived by taxi to go to the hospital and I'd been expecting to take one person to his appointment, but when I got there, three men were waiting! The man I was meant to be with, unfortunately didn't get in the taxi. However, after spending some time getting to know him and building up his trust, I managed to get him to hospital and to all his appointments - I even helped him with his recovery."

Paul has a mental health diagnosis which he feels helps him relate to the different types of people he meets in his role.

"It helps because I can relate to homeless people because I know what they're going through. I tend to discuss things like music or tell them things that they might be interested in like if I've been to a concert. It's about using conversation topics to connect with people. Different people will be interested in different things, and it's also about building relationships.

By speaking to these people as a friend they are much more likely to follow on with their treatments and make positive changes to their lives. Just because you are homeless, doesn't mean there is no hope."

Paul has been instrumental in working with patients and supports them by booking appointments and supporting them to attend. As a result of this project, every patient who had tested positive for Hepatitis C at the surgery has gone on for further treatment at the hospital and now over five clients are Hepatitis C free.

Paul says, "It makes me feel good about myself when someone is helped on the road to recovery. If you have empathy for people and care about the things they are talking about, then it makes all the difference."



Tim Mossholder - Unsplash



The international Solent family

In a first for Solent,
we recruited a team
of highly qualified
mental health
nurses from India.



In March we were thrilled to welcome nurses from India into our Solent family. Litty, Shweta, Elizabeth and Preethy have all joined Solent to train as mental health nurses, helping to care for the people in our community.

They started working at our working at our Adult Mental Health Inpatient Unit, The Orchards, based in St James' Hospital in Portsmouth, providing mental health care for adults who live in the city. The Unit is made up of two wards: Hawthorns, a 20 bedded acute ward, and Maples, a 10 bedded psychiatric intensive care ward.

Hollie Tiernan, Clinical Practice Educator, who was part of the interviewing and selection process, is excited by the new nurses joining and bringing their experience and training to the Trust. Hollie says, "They broaden and diversify our team. They are all general nurse trained, and have a Psychiatric Nursing Master's degree, so they bring a wealth of expertise and skills."





Litty John, from South India, was really pleased to get the opportunity to work with Solent. She heard about the opportunity from an overseas agency in Kerala and from that moment researched the trust to find out more. Litty says, "I love learning and I aspire to pursue a doctoral degree and to grow further in my career with Solent."

Shweta Andrias found out about Solent through an international mental health nurses' recruitment agency, Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI). Shweta completed her B.Sc. in Nursing in 2007 and after three years of teaching experience, pursued her master's degree in mental health nursing.

Shweta adds, "There is still stigma related to mental illness, this upsets me because all people who need medical and psychological treatment should be able to access it without judgment. Many patients with mental health issues remain untreated due to lack of knowledge around mental health treatment and as a nurse I would like to help them live a better life, with dignity and respect."

Elizabeth Varughese, from Rajkot in Western India, says, "It has been a beautiful journey so far. When this opening came along, I applied straight away. I have always wanted to use expertise and skills in a mental health facility to help patients. I'm looking forward to growing with this amazing team."

Preethy Ulahannan found out about the recruitment drive through another Indian recruiting agency. Preethy says, "I aspire to keep my mental health nursing skills and knowledge up to date and keep on learning. I am also happy to be at Solent and I like the weather and its diverse culture. Life in Portsmouth so far is amazing and I'm looking forward to more blessings in the future."

Hollie says the recruitment drive was hugely successful and necessary as it is often challenging recruiting mental health nurses. She says, "There is a shortage of mental health nurses in the UK, so we had to think creatively and approaching an international market was our next step."

Hollie adds, "I have been working as a registered mental health nurse for the past 11 years, with experience in acute, psychiatric intensive care and rehabilitation wards. My current role is as practice educator, based at The Orchards. This role involves supporting the clinical team with their learning needs, providing training and development sessions. I also work with new starters to make sure they receive a detailed induction. I am keen to make sure every member of staff feels confident in their job role and valued as a member of our team."

Mental health nursing is rewarding, fulfilling and diverse. We want to welcome all our new mental health nurses and the next international group who recently arrived in the UK and will be joining the team after their induction and registration.

If you are interested in a career in the NHS or for more information on how to become part of the Solent NHS Trust team, please visit solent.nhs.uk/join-us



Paving the way for innovative orthopaedics

Whilst treating a four-year-old girl for foot drop (weak ankles) in 2018, Claire Narborough, Children's Physiotherapist, got the idea of developing an improved splint for children due to the limited range of splints available. Claire was inspired and wanted to develop something where the child could improve their muscle strength, unlike the rigid splints where movement is limited.

Claire says, "I am currently developing an ankle splint to improve the walking ability of children with foot drop. I was frustrated that there are no suitable off the shelf, soft ankle supports for young children with moderate foot drop. So I designed the OrthoPed splint to meet this need."

Claire explains that the OrthoPed splint can be put on and taken off with one hand, which is hugely beneficial as, with this condition, one arm and one leg is often affected (hemiplegia). It can also be used with Velcro fastening shoes which will allow some children who cannot tie shoelaces to put on their splint and shoes independently. Claire adds, "The OrthoPed splint will also reduce the number of appointments needed for the child and parent to attend as the splint is an off the shelf item that can be stored at a clinic for issue directly to the child. This will save parents and children time travelling to appointments."

Claire has been awarded four grants. These have allowed her to work with a business mentor, complete clinician and patient feedback groups, and work with an orthotics company to progress the prototype.

A team of engineers from the National Physical Laboratory are ensuring that the splint is made from the most functionally appropriate materials and will fatigue test the prototype. Claire says, "I am applying for a grant later this month, in collaboration with Portsmouth University, for a study to show the difference in walking abilities when wearing the OrthoPed splint compared to a rigid splint, lycra sock and barefoot. We will work with a group of children with foot drop to prove that the splint does work, which ultimately could be life-changing. It will help them feel more independent and also more mobile improving their quality of life and giving them hope for the future."

If all goes well you may start to see the OrthoPed splint used within the NHS in next 12-18 months and improving the lives of children with foot drop.

Claire's work on the OrthoPed is part of her own individual project and is not Solent NHS Trust intellectual property.



OpCOURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental health or wellbeing, expert help is available from OpCOURAGE. A dedicated mental health and wellbeing service for those that have left or are due to leave the armed forces.

The Transition, Intervention & Liaison Service (TILS) are able to help people with a variety of challenges including low mood, problems sleeping, anger and frustration and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

To self-refer tel: 0300 365 2000 (option 4).
Email: gateway@berkshire.nhs.uk

If you are in crisis and need urgent support the High Intensity Service (HIS) can help support you. We work alongside other mainstream services to provide wrap around, veteran specific support. If you need urgent support contact NHS 111 or if immediate support is needed call 999, who will ensure you get the right help and support for you to meet your needs and can refer you into the HIS. You can also self-refer and get more information by telephoning: 023 9438 7924 or email: snhs.veteranshis.se@nhs.net.



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