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Celebrating Excellence Awards 2022
When we hosted our first Celebrating Excellence Awards in 2019, no-one would have expected that a global pandemic was just around the corner and that the NHS would face one of the toughest periods in its history.

Sadly, history was made again this month with the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who had served us for over 70 years.

The Queen was an ardent supporter of the NHS and it is fitting that tonight as we recognise the exceptional work you do across Newcastle Hospitals, that we reflect on Her Majesty’s legacy.

We received hundreds of nominations for our staff, volunteers and charity supporters for this year’s awards - moving and inspirational stories which, over and over again, reflected the hard work, dedication and absolute commitment to our organisation.

You should all be proud to be shortlisted and you are all winners in our eyes. We would also like to congratulate the winners of our ‘People At Our Heart’ Awards who join us as special guests.

There are 14 awards in total and tonight’s special event is the culmination of our Flourish ‘Thank You’ Month, where there were opportunities to recognise and quietly thank colleagues for all they do.

We also have two additional awards – the Chairman’s Award and the Chief Executive’s Award – which we will present at the end of the evening.

Finally, we would like to thank all of our generous sponsors, including this year’s prestige sponsor – The Academic Health Science Network North East and North Cumbria - who have helped to make our Awards so special.

We really hope you enjoy tonight and good luck!

Dame Jackie Daniel, Chief Executive
Professor Sir John Burn, Chairman
Stroke research team

This team’s integrated way of working has ensured research is embedded into the clinical care and treatment of all our stroke patients, placing Newcastle Hospitals consistently in the top performing recruitment centres.

Their model provides the opportunity for patients to be considered and (often) offered the chance to participate in some of the most ground-breaking research projects, at the same time as they are being acutely assessed and admitted.

Recently the team recruited the first patient in Europe into a new stem cell trial - an area where they are recognised for their expertise – as well as the UK’s first patient into a highly complex stroke trial. They truly put patients at the heart of everything they do.

Translational project team

This small team manage TARGET national – an initiative that uses blood samples to find ‘faulty genes’ and help cancer patients to the most effective experimental treatment.

Originally set up in the Sir Bobby Robson Clinical Trials Research Centre and the Christie, they have already made a huge impact on patients and with the trial expanding to other Experimental Cancer Medicine Centres (ECMCs) across the country, they are currently the UK’s top recruiters.

This cutting-edge science is leading the way in an innovative oncology approach to individualised cancer care and cure and the team’s focus and dedication to providing patients with potential treatment options – and improving their long-term survival – is also paving the way for a greater understanding of the future of cancer medicine.
COVID-19 research team

As the NHS faced one of its most difficult years in its history, the global pandemic presented a new set of challenges as the race began for a safe and effective vaccine against coronavirus.

Over the last two years, the COVID-19 research team of medics, clinical, nursing and administration staff worked tirelessly to set-up and deliver numerous large-scale vaccine studies safely, quickly and efficiently in a high-pressured environment.

They have been at the forefront of delivering 65 COVID research studies - recruiting more than 6,000 people to date – and were one of the first in the country to be selected for The Oxford Vaccine Trial study which was set up at pace enabling 700 participants, including more than 200 staff, to take part.

Their work has fed into the licensing of vaccinations to support the NHS vaccination roll-out programme across the country and has earned the Trust an international reputation as a leading vaccine study centre. Team work at its best!

Paediatric Clinical Research Facility

As many clinical trials were paused or stopped during the pandemic, the Paediatric Clinical Research Facility played a vital role in coordinating, setting up and delivering a pioneering gene therapy study for boys with Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD), dosing the UK’s first patient in May 2021.

Working with numerous teams across the Trust and Newcastle University, they helped ensure a safety taskforce was in place and that the participant and their family received the appropriate care and support throughout.

This is just one example of a team that works tirelessly to deliver research to children from all ages and disease groups, bringing hope to a patient population who currently have little to no treatment options available to them.
Newcastle frailty prevention force

As the ageing population grows, the need for proactively identifying and managing frailty is vital, which is what this small team have been doing since October 2019 by working with GPs in the West End of Newcastle to improve the health and wellbeing of people over 65.

GPs provide a list of all moderately frail patients who are proactively approached for a comprehensive geriatric assessment (CGA) and case management. Physiotherapy technical instructors have improved strength, balance and mood through exercise, small aids and adaptations have been provided and patients can be referred onto community exercises or connected to community social groups when discharged.

Through this proactive, individualised, work, the team has identified cognitive and memory impairments; reduced inappropriate use of multiple medicines, screened for bone health, identified malnutrition and screened for sleep conditions and made referrals to appropriate professionals in partnership with the GPs.

Integrated Covid Hub North East (ICHNE)

Under strong leadership, this team’s can-do attitude and work ethic led to the creation of the NHS’s first huge covid lab serving the North of England, processing 8 million covid tests as well as creating 1,000 jobs on the back of a recruitment campaign targeting disadvantaged communities.

This came at a time when the Integrated Laboratory Medicine directorate was exceptionally busy dealing with Covid and cancer workloads yet, despite this, the team visited other labs across the country and worked with a commercial partner to develop an innovative robotic Amplitude system for processing the tests.

Partnering colleagues in Newcastle University, Newcastle City Council and industry, they created ICHNE with its components - a lighthouse covid lab, a public health facing coordination and response centre, and an Innovation Lab developing new diagnostic tests – which have made an impact across the region.
Collaborative Newcastle diabetes intervention

Diabetes has been a long-standing risk for surgery with high blood sugar levels often leading to delayed operations, poorer patient outcomes and increased length of stay. As part of a pilot, three primary care networks and Healthworks, in conjunction with RAIDR, targeted patients with uncontrolled diabetes well before their operation, enrolling them into a social prescribing intervention to improve their diabetic control.

This primary care data was merged onto the elective waiting list to create a dashboard - now used across the North East and North Cumbria - to target patients in those network areas, enabling them to refer onto services within their community.

Data has shown a significant fall in patients’ average blood glucose (sugar) levels and their feedback has been incredibly positive, particularly around this type of collaborative working with third sector organisations and primary care. All of this has been achieved without resource and this model has now received funding to be rolled out across Newcastle, Gateshead, Northumberland and North Tyneside.

Viral hepatitis team – hepatology

The impact of the pandemic meant the viral hepatitis team had to think outside the box and come up with new solutions to treat patients with Hepatitis C (HCV), after usual referral routes – such as prisons and drug and alcohol services – were significantly disrupted.

Working with Northumbria and Durham police, they provided testing kits and training for staff to ensure arrested individuals were tested for HCV if at risk, as well as developing England’s first treatment pathway for any positive patients.

Rather than wait for referrals, staff also developed a process to identify positive test results in the laboratory, proactively contacting patients for treatment, as well as coming up with an innovative track and trace programme to attempt to break the chain of transmission for HCV.

The team also used incentives to encourage this patient group – traditionally one of the hardest to reach – to access treatment, all of which meant the North East and North Cumbria region treated the second highest number of HCV patients in the country.
Radiotherapy physics

To ensure the highest quality of safety for each patient, every time they receive radiotherapy treatment, this multi-skilled team has designed an extensive Quality Assurance (QA) system which is now held up as an exemplar to other radiotherapy centres across the country.

Their work was recognised during an Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations (IR(ME)R) inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2021 which reported the team’s quality management system and quality control of equipment using ionising radiation reflected ‘excellent and outstanding practice.’

By extension, the team’s clinical scientists have been invited to review the quality of patient safety at other radiotherapy centres in the UK. This dedication to quality and patient safety means our cancer patients, while at their most vulnerable, can be assured they really are in safe hands.

Renal transplant ERAs project team

This small group of very dedicated individuals, supported by Newcastle Improvement, developed the country’s first Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) programme for renal transplant patients which has been a huge success story.

While the statistics below speak for themselves, most importantly, patients said they felt more empowered and reported positive feedback on their overall experiences. Some of the outcomes included:

- A five-day reduction in the patients’ length of stay
- 87% of patients’ were mobile in the 24 hours after their surgery
- Patients used less fluids with 77% of IVT being stopped within 24 hours
- Less opiates were used with no impact on pain
- Catheters and drains being removed earlier in the hospital stay (median day 3)

The team is now aiming to roll-out this excellent programme and benefits to liver transplant patients in the near future.
Karen Hutton

As a sister in main outpatients, Karen is known for going that extra mile for patients with learning disabilities and those with heightened anxiety about coming to hospital, giving them an exceptional experience for their own visits.

Working alongside the learning disability team, she produced a very basic social story for a patient attending clinic, consisting of photographs of the entrance to the hospital, reception desks, weigh room, clinic room, and the doctor they would see.

On another occasion, she chatted with the parents/carers of a young adult with learning disabilities to see what else could be put in place to ensure the patient’s journey was as smooth and seamless as possible, liaising with other hospital teams to make sure any required tests could be carried out in the same consultation room.

She has met with patients/carers/parents’ numerous times in the coffee shop – and even in the car park - just to introduce herself and explain what to expect in outpatients and is always willing to offer her support and share her expertise with others across the Trust. Healthcare at its best with people at our heart!

Community response and rehabilitation team

As part of their strategy to reduce the risk of patients falling in the community, the team has taken advantage of being able to see patients in their own homes as an opportunity to carry out a full comprehensive assessment.

As well as looking at factors such as mobility and the home environment, as part of a pilot project the team began to take peoples' lying and standard blood pressures, as a standard measure in identifying patients’ risk of fall and a potential trigger for further medical review or investigation.

Their results revealed significant findings; 1 out of 3 patients had orthostatic hypertension and 2 out of 3 of them did not display symptoms but dropped their blood pressure significantly on sitting or standing, reinforcing the importance of checking lying and standing blood pressure as part of what they do and not only when people complain of symptoms such as dizziness.

An area often overlooked by professionals, this can have a massive impact on patients’ ability to cope and manage their condition at home. A seemingly simple project with a big impact they are now looking to launch this to the entire team to fully implement shortly.
Newcastle Improvement

Since being established almost two years ago, this team have supported a culture of continuous quality improvement in many different areas to facilitate service and quality improvements not just across Newcastle Hospitals but further afield.

From supporting huge pieces of work, such as our surgical transformation and outpatient transformation programmes, they have also continued to train and support people in improvement methodology and improvement coaching and partner with the education and workforce development team to ensure Quality Improvement is visible and shared as part of induction and training.

Working with the Institute of Healthcare Improvement (IHI), they also support “What Matters To You” conversations, allowing staff to take forward their ideas and have worked together with primary and intermediate care practitioners on multiple projects including the roll-out of digital dermatology from GP referral to hospital, which is now a sustained pathway and has reduced unnecessary hospital attendances, and developing a joint spinal service.

A great example of a team that tackles every project with partnership working at its very core to get the best results for patients and staff.
Great North Children’s Hospital school and enrichment team

Comprising of staff from a range of partnership projects and teachers from our school team, this team developed significantly during the pandemic and – despite its challenges – provided an amazing service to our patients, gaining an ‘outstanding’ Ofsted rating at the same time.

They have supported patients through their GCSEs and provided much needed pastoral support, exercise, art and music therapies to children with chronic and life-limiting illness. Their impact has been phenomenal on improving patients’ health and wellbeing and, unsurprisingly, feedback from families and patients has been amazing.

Always looking at innovative ways that appeal to patients’ interests, which in turn can help recovery, they always put the needs of patients and families at the heart of everything they do by working as ‘one team.’

Co-ordination and Response Centre

Opened in late 2020 with the aim of being a global leader in the fight against COVID-19 through accurate and fast testing, cutting-edge science and robust data analysis, this hub works on behalf of a huge regional partnership involving local authorities, NHS organisations, public health teams, local universities and industry.

The first of its kind in England, the centre has placed the region at the forefront of managing the virus while its localised and bespoke approach to test and trace has produced data and intelligence that has not only increased the CRC’s understanding of COVID-19 impacts within hospital and community settings but also provided insight to enable local authorities to strengthen their own pandemic support plans.

The work this team have managed to do in such a short and challenging space of time, while building and strengthening strong, inclusive and dynamic partnerships, is to be applauded.
Infectious diseases COVID-19 research team

Nominated also in the research category, this team took partnership working to a different level to set up and deliver numerous large-scale vaccine and COVID-19 research studies, which ultimately fed into the licensing of vaccinations to support the NHS vaccination roll-out programme.

Every individual - the medics, nurses, clinical and administration staff – worked seamlessly towards a common goal with support from directorate colleagues, laboratory colleagues, the clinical trials pharmacy, Newcastle Joint Research Office, the local clinical research network and academic partners.

Each study has been delivered on time and to target and the team has ensured each study participant has received the highest possible standard of care, despite them consistently working in a high-pressure environment and dealing with the uncertainty of a pandemic both in work and at home.
Specialised clinical frailty network – lung cancer

A cross-directorate team including cancer services, respiratory medicine, palliative care and St. Oswald’s Hospice, this group of medical / nursing staff and allied health professionals was initially formed as part of the first wave of NHS hospital Trusts supported by NHS England and NHS Elect to focus on frailty in specialist services.

Since then, they've developed expertise and resources which have benefited clinical and shared-decision making with patients who have a lung cancer diagnosis including the introduction of electronic frailty scoring - the first of its kind in the Trust.

The group was also successful in gaining funding for a time-limited occupational therapist post providing outpatient services not offered before (which will shortly come on stream as a permanent resource) and setting up a six-month pilot clinic between the Trust and hospice to ensure holistic care is provided and that what matters most to patients is heard.

All of their work has been in addition to clinical commitments, but the value of their work is respected across the Trust and has given impetus to other work around frailty.
Andy Pike

Since stepping into the directorate manager role at the Dental Hospital just before lockdown, Andy's inclusive leadership style has ensured staff have been kept abreast of the constant changes in policy and practice due to COVID-19 and, with the help of his teams, got the hospital back to treating patients quicker than elsewhere in the country.

Described as someone who ‘encourages communication and dialogue to find ways to improve and grow’, he is an advocate of staff wellbeing whether that’s supporting colleagues while sitting exit exams or helping junior members of staff to take forward the Rainbow badge initiative.

As the Trust’s Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, he has ensured regular directorate meetings (on alternate days to accommodate different staff attendance) are in place where all staff are asked to raise issues beforehand to facilitate discussion either at meetings or in private, if preferred, and is a champion of the Trust’s ‘What Matters To You’ programme.

0-19 Flourish champions

While they don’t collectively work together as a team every day, the 0-19 Flourish champions have made a huge difference to the morale and wellbeing of staff working across this service and the wider City.

Many requested to take on the role in the midst of the pandemic, recognising that staff were tired, morale was low and some were even leaving the service. The champions came together to look at ways to support their colleagues, not only embracing and promoting the Trust's various wellbeing Flourish campaigns but taking this a step further.

Lunchtime walking groups were established, as well as outside team events and a 0-19 staff wellbeing Facebook group, where lots of motivational and positive information is shared for physical and emotional wellbeing.

Despite their own busy schedules, their positive and can-do attitude has ensured that staff have always had a shoulder to lean on if needed and they live and breathe not only the Trust values but those of the Flourish framework.
Debbie Banks

As head of main outpatients as well as an array of multi-specialised services, Debbie is a constant bridge and inspirational leader to all her teams, respected by staff and peers alike and a voice for all in ‘what matters.’

She has navigated many of her teams through major service change – from the introduction of Paperlite which turned the health records service completely on its head - to departmental restructures and even the closure of the Leazes’ Wing Medical Records Library which marked the end of a paper record that had served the RVI (in many shapes and forms) since 1906.

Throughout Debbie has ensured all discussions were open and transparent and that staff were listened to and fully supported, taking on their concerns and putting their ideas into practice such as the input, planning and implementation of a high-class scanning bureau.

Her nomination described her as a true ambassador of Newcastle Hospitals who has ‘opened our eyes to a new way of working, guiding us through a new culture change with the long-term vision of a highly specialised tree of her many branched services but most importantly, she cares.’

Newcastle Occupational Health Service

A lynchpin of Newcastle Hospitals, this is a team that quietly goes about its business to support staff with compassion and care – responding to the many unexpected changes and demands throughout the pandemic and now during the recovery period.

They have worked collaboratively with the wider Trust using a flexible approach to deliver the best advice to individuals, departments, and strategic leaders in a rapidly responsive and professional manner and also used the resources available to them in novel and innovative ways to support the delivery of occupational health services.

From addressing psychological wellbeing to their involvement with staff test and trace, the COVID and flu staff vaccination programmes, as well as continuing the ‘day job’ and all that entails within the service, this is a team that really makes a difference to our workforce every day.

Within their own service, they have also adopted flexible working and new modes of communication including daily team huddles through teams, email briefings and management updates and this is borne out in the staff survey results, which were number one in several categories – most notably morale.
Charlotte Proud
Charlotte, who is a physiotherapy associate practitioner, is living proof that if you put your mind to it, you can achieve anything.

A dedicated fundraiser for The Sir Bobby Robson Foundation, who supported her uncle, this year, she tackled her 7th Great North Run for the charity and last year had her story featured on national television as she also has brittle bone disease.

Her positivity and determination is inspiring for anyone who hears about her fundraising efforts and not content with just running, she's now turned her hand to cycling, doing the Newcastle Cyclone Cycling Challenge. A true role model for the Trust and the Foundation which she so passionately supports.

The Grafters’ Club
A burn injury on a child can affect an entire family, both at the time of the injury and the years that follow, leaving not just physical but also emotional and psychological scars.

This dedicated group go above and beyond to offer ongoing support to help children and their families, helping them adapt and cope with new situations and return to their daily activities.

From online sessions for the children including music and psychological support for parents during lockdown, to organised parties and residential for young patients, they have helped them to accept their scars and feel like they belong. Our teams are grateful for your care and support.
Nicola Ray

As if a pandemic and lockdown was not enough in 2020 Nicola, who works as a senior medical records clerk at the Freeman, was diagnosed with breast cancer and found herself having surgery in the organisation where she works!

Grateful for all the support she received during her treatment, she initially organised a raffle and cake sale for Breast Cancer Now and then completed a 10k walk raising almost £1,600. But then she received devastating news – the cancer had returned after nine months.

After further surgery and radiotherapy, Nicola was supported by Maggie’s Centre and found the strength to continue with her charity fundraising this time for them, completing a 90ft charity abseil. She has since gone on to raise £5,000 in total for different charities through dance classes, 10k night walks, staff tombolas and sweepstakes, the list is endless.

Her nominated read: “Nicola is our queen of hearts and no matter what the result will always be a true winner and hero in our team.”
Pippa Anderson

Patients can present with symptoms of dysphonia (hoarse voice) due to many underlying conditions and for many it can have a significant impact on their day-to-day function as well as their quality of life.

For singers and performers in particular, a voice disorder can be devastating both financially and psychologically and, as a vocal rehabilitation coach, Pippa has given her time and expertise to optimise patients’ singing voices despite their underlying disorder.

Her dedication to this specific client group – all in her own time and continued during lockdown via video calls - has resulted in patients with vocal cord palsy re-joining choirs, patients’ being able to do local gigs post-radiotherapy and hobbyist singers being able to sing again for stress-relief.

Great North Children’s Hospital volunteers (pop-up shop and administration)

This dedicated small team of volunteers are steadfastly committed to The Great North Children’s Hospital and generously give their free time throughout the year to support our patients and staff.

Many are regular faces at the pop-up shop which they run, from opening it up and selling merchandise to customers, to cashing up at the end of the day. They also regularly cross cover shifts and are always willing to help out at other events which promote – or raise money – for the hospital. Without them the shop would not exist!

Then there are the administration / event volunteers who provide support to the management team and help to organise events as well as anything asked of them. Loyal and dedicated, they really are an invaluable asset and thoroughly deserve this recognition.
Steve Lowe, Volunteer and events

Steve - a volunteer and events co-ordinator at Cresswell Pele Tower – is described as ‘central to the success of Newcastle Hospitals’ Green Gym events’ which are organised in collaboration with local conservation groups to address the impact of climate emergency – and preserving this tower and walled garden!

In addition to his environmental work, he dedicates his spare time to this Trust group and does not do things by half! A beach clean with Steve is not just grabbing a bag and picking up rubbish as members stroll along the coastline; the day starts with a safety briefing to ensure everyone is aware of the potential dangers.

Equally important, Steve gives his time and generously shares his knowledge on subjects such as geology, beach formation, the impact on the ecology from industry and development and works hard to engage and involve everyone, which is also reflected in the team’s involvement in restoring the Pele Tower.

Without his dedication many of the varied events and activities this group are involved in would not have been possible – a true testament to his support!
Championing Equality

Clinical coding team
Champions of the Project Choice Programme for many years, which helps young people with learning disabilities/difficulties or autism gain work experience, this team always welcome students into their workplace to give them the skills and confidence to pursue careers.

By creating a supportive and open culture, the entire team not only value the input the students make and fresh ideas they bring, but also recognise they have become stronger themselves as a result and many students have gone onto traineeships and permanent roles in Newcastle Hospitals after their time with them.

Despite periods of significant change in their own department – and of course a pandemic – they have continued to support this fantastic programme, helping students to be successful confident young people with bright futures ahead of them.

Cheryl Gascoigne
An advanced occupational therapist by profession, Cheryl lives and breathes inclusive practice and as the chairperson of the disabilities staff network, truly demonstrates the values of the Trust in all her interactions.

She was instrumental in creating the ‘carers passport’ and ‘health and wellbeing passport’ which has significantly improved the anxiety levels of staff that use them.

Cheryl is also leading on a sensory support programme which is having direct impact on children’s services that the Trust offer. The impact of this is highly significant to young people with sensory processing issues and their families and care givers.
JJ Gacis and Setty Mpofu

As part of a year-long project, JJ and Setty tasked themselves to improving the quality of BAME staff experiences within the nursing and midwifery workforce with a particular focus on incivilities and microaggressions and career development.

They started by conducting ‘listening exercises’ but adapted their engagement methods as they went along to ensure everyone taking part felt comfortable and safe sharing their very personal experiences.

A series of workshops were created, delivered and evaluated (which have now become part of the wider curriculum offer from Education and Workforce Development), two awareness videos have also been produced to support staff and further resources, including short animations, are being developed.

Two driven and passionate role models who are actively championing inclusivity to ensure Newcastle Hospitals is a place to work where everyone feels valued.

Odeth Richardson

As head of service for occupational therapy, chair of the Race Equalities Staff Network and, more recently, national chair of the RCOT/BAOT Council – to name a few – Odeth is an authentic leader who proactively supports staff to be the best person they can be by celebrating who they are and the cultures that they take pride in belonging to.

She is a constant advocate for those who need an ally and has been a tremendous guardian for all staff in relation to race equality in recent years with ‘an energy that chips away at seemingly immovable barriers by using innovation, passion, wisdom and a sense of humour that is second to none.’

Her pioneering work sits not just within OT or the Trust’s equality and diversity portfolio, but stretches across the city, region and nationally so it is not surprising Odeth was nominated for this category more than once.

One person wrote: “Odeth is very precious and special and shines a little glitter and love over everything she does. I wish we could bottle some of her enthusiasm and drive to make the world a fairer and more caring place for everyone.”
Newcastle green nephrology

Kidney care has a high environmental impact with dialysis patients carrying a carbon footprint 18 times higher than the average NHS England patient. Recognising this, the team has been at the forefront of efforts to make kidney care more sustainable.

From winning the UK Green Nephrology prize in 2012 for a bulk recycling project, to the retro-fitting of hardware to reduce energy consumption of dialysis machines, or looking at all recent major procurements through a ‘sustainability lens’, they have nearly halved energy consumption of the replacement Freeman dialysis water plant.

In partnership with the Sustainable Healthcare Coalition, the renal unit undertook the first carbon foot-printing analysis of the haemodialysis care pathway to include input from the supply chain which, as well as identifying carbon hotspots, is leading to the development of a carbon calculator for use by individual renal units and in national audit.

The group also founded Newcastle Hospitals’ Green Gym and have developed a partnership with the Northumberland Rivers and Wildlife Trusts to set up ‘Nature Connect – Newcastle Hospitals’, which aims to connect patients and staff with nature and support nature restoration across the region.
Jason Gandhi

As a Fellow in environmentally sustainable anaesthesia, Jason has worked on multiple projects looking at the carbon footprinting of bronchoscopes, volatile capture technology and wider sustainability issues in theatres.

But it was his work on the use of Desflurane – the most environmentally damaging gas that we use at the Freeman Hospital – that prompted this nomination.

Anaesthetic gases are a carbon hotspot in delivering clinical care and Jason conducted a literature review on the clinical indications for Desflurane, which directly resulted in the peri-operative and cardiothoracic departments no longer using that gas or stocking it on site.

Previously Desflurane usage at the Freeman had accounted for as much as 993 tonnes of CO2 equivalents in 2016 – in 2021 it had reduced to 57.4 tonnes, which while still substantial is a huge improvement and a step towards helping the Trust to reach its net zero ambition.

Nutrition and dietetics therapy services

In Newcastle, an estimated half a million units of medical nutrition products in plastic packaging are used per year across primary and secondary care. While all of this packaging is recyclable, the team were keen to know if recycling was taking place in practice.

Working with industry, they developed a sustainability project focussing on maximising the recycling of these products across the Trust, conducting baseline surveys to understand current levels of recycling and to measure the potential impact of future interventions.

Two workstreams were established - primary care (care homes, patients at home) and secondary care (selected high use wards at Freeman and RVI) – and based on the results a programme of education was undertaken and launched during National Recycling Week highlighting the aim of the project and instructions on how to recycle appropriately.

A step-by-step guide ‘How to implement a recycling project for medical nutritional packaging’ is now available on-line and an abstract was also accepted and published in March 2022, which is now available to other Trusts. Repeated surveys will now take place in the Autumn.
Rising star

Danielle Gorman
At every stage of her career, Danielle has grown her expertise and knowledge to provide the very best care for patients, facing each new challenge that is thrown at her with confidence, positivity and maturity.

Starting as a healthcare assistant at Newcastle General Hospital, she went on to qualify as a staff nurse, and four years later was appointed a sarcoma nurse specialist where she supported the retro-peritoneal service and orthopaedic sarcoma service – a first for the specialty.

Then in 2021, Danielle joined ward 19 as a junior sister and her inspiring leadership has supported a developing nursing team, as well as helping to shape a day of surgery pathway for patients. She is a fantastic and approachable role model – watch this space what she does next!

Alpha Toledo
Alpha joined the community response and rehabilitation nursing team at the start of the pandemic and her presence is described as inspirational.

In a short period of time, she introduced a quality improvement of identifying and reporting lying and standing blood pressure readings for patients at home, with an 80% update from team members she mentored. This has resulted in patients being identified for further follow-up or treatment that would, otherwise, have been missed.

Alpha has a real passion for her role and her drive to innovate and make a real difference to her patients is already having a huge impact – let’s see what she’s doing in another two years!
Jenny Welford

Since joining the Northern Centre for Cancer Care occupational therapy team in 2018, Jenny has consistently demonstrated her commitment and dedication to deliver high quality care for patients who have a diagnosis of cancer.

She has been the lead AHP and a founding member of the Newcastle Specialised Clinical Frailty Group since its inception and her passion for supporting frail patients has led to several service improvement initiatives that have had a significant impact on their care.

Other projects she is involved in include ‘ChemoFit’ - a pilot to investigate the feasibility of a home based prehabilitation intervention for patients receiving chemotherapy before oesophago-gastric surgery - and a year-long secondment in which she set up the first outpatient occupational therapy service for people who have a diagnosis of lung cancer.

Jenny consistently goes above and beyond for her patients, empowering people to manage symptoms and also supports them in future planning, including for end of life, resulting in a third of the patients on her caseload having had their preferred place of death documented, with 77% of these patients going on to achieve their preferred place of death – double the national average and incredibly important for patients and their families.

Jamie Robinson

Initially introduced to Newcastle Hospitals through Project Choice, Jamie was already familiar with many departments before joining the Freeman portering team in 2021.

His role specifically revolves around waste streams, ensuring waste is segregated and stored appropriately, and often he liaises with various contractors who regularly comment on what a super ambassador he is for the Trust.

When the role was made permanent, Jamie successfully secured a full-time job and colleagues cannot express highly enough the work he does with words such as kind, diligent and conscientious frequently in their vocabulary.

He has also taken on the responsibility of training new colleagues in the use of equipment and processes, as well as supporting the portering department out-of-hours by working additional shifts when we have experienced staffing issues. A true unsung and definitely a rising star!
Andrew Peattie

A porter at the RVI, Andrew has taken his day-to-day duties to another level, regularly going out of his way to support staff, patients and visitors.

He starts his day before his actual shift begins, collecting wheelchairs from around the hospital to return to reception areas, checking they are in good working order (with any damaged ones removed and reported for repair), before proceeding to clean them for the day ahead.

This isn’t something Andrew has just adopted since the pandemic, it’s a service he began since joining the Trust in 2007. His kindness and consideration have earned him numerous Greatix reports from staff, backed up by phone calls and letters from grateful patients and visitors who praise him for his professional and friendly service or just want to say thank you for helping to calm their nerves!

A true gentleman committed to creating a positive experience for everyone he meets.

Kim Anderson

Kim – or the ‘oracle within school health’ as she is known – goes way beyond her role to support the service in the Kenton Clinic, whether that’s running drop-ins at schools, delivering personal, social and health education, organising the National Child Measurement Programme or seeing young people and families for support.

Now semi-retired she has been in school health for more than 20 years and with the Trust for over 40! Described as someone who deserves a lot of thanks – ‘but wouldn’t want it’ – she is one of the main cogs that keeps the team going.

Kim has been a key part of so many working groups and initiatives across the service it would be impossible to list them all but is clearly one of our unsung heroes.
Gary Eltringham

While many people are aware Newcastle Hospitals was the first in the UK to care for patients with COVID-19, fewer will know that within a short period of time we were also one of the first laboratories to carry out testing.

A lot of this work can be accredited to Gary – our lead healthcare scientist for molecular assay development before the pandemic – who within ten days of a request from Public Health England, had verified and operationalised the first iteration of the SARS-COV-2 PCR test to support the Trust and regional screening provision.

The Newcastle laboratory continued to be the sole provider of this testing for several months as other local NHS laboratories stood up their own services. During that time, Gary led the verification of multiple iterations of the PCR test across several different platforms with the support from the diagnostic lab and scientists from the local University.

When the diagnostic regional service was fully embedded, his attention turned to research and development and he was pivotal in liaising with colleagues in industry, academic and the wider NHS services before moving onto the Lighthouse Laboratory where, as ICHNE lab manager, he was key to integrating the Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 testing service into the wider network.
Katie Watson

Undoubtedly one of the more familiar faces around Newcastle Hospitals, Katie, our head of chaplaincy, is an inspirational leader and friend (to many) who cares for patients, families and staff with the utmost respect and dignity.

Her compassion and humanity make a difference to someone every day – often during very tragic and traumatic circumstances – yet she takes the weight of all that responsibility on her shoulders and greets the next person who needs her help with a smile and kind word.

A fierce advocate for our staff, she works tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure support is available for anyone who needs it and often uses the guise of having a ‘fondness for cake’ as an opportunity to check in on colleagues – day and night – just to see if they are okay.

One of her colleagues, whose wedding vows she renewed, said: “Her support during my illness was overwhelming and she was a star on the day she renewed our vows. Katie gives 200% of herself to this role and still finds time for her family and raise lots of money for charity by running ultra-marathons, She's one in a million and the Trust is so very lucky to have her.”
Zoe Lumley

With a willingness and selflessness to help others, Zoe is the ‘visible face’ of ward 23 and has excelled in her roles as a housekeeper and ward clerk, going out of her way to help colleagues feel valued and recognised by organising celebrations of their special events.

Meticulous to attention for detail, she has always ensured the Freeman ward is well organised but stepped up again during the refurbishment of the hospital’s emergency admissions suite when the existing EAS was temporarily located to ward 2.

Not only did Zoe welcome colleagues and patients to their new – but different – environment, she proactively supported the EAS team by ordering items they needed for their move and co-ordinated the transfer of them, knowing the team did not have a housekeeper.

She linked closely with the team refurbishing the unit to gain access to EAS to assess the equipment needs, re-organised the storeroom and when the time came to reopen the unit, ensured that there were welcome messages in place. Now a ward clerk, she has already re-organised the administration area and created a staff education board. A visible member of an army of staff that keep our hospitals safely running.
Lisa Clark
Described as a real Geordie mammy who wears her heart on her sleeve and is always ready to help anyone, Lisa has been working on the wards of The Great North Children’s Hospital for the past 12 years.

Whether she’s taking medicines histories when children first come into hospital, sorting out any related problems while they are on the wards or organising new medication when they leave, she is a constant and integral part of the care pathway.

As part of the Kidsmedz Project, Lisa has taught and trained many children how to swallow medicines (a life skill particularly important for those with underlying illnesses) as well as offering the tablet training to staff.

Her excellent bedside manner has built up a huge amount of trust and respect amongst children and their families and she’s a huge asset to her pharmacy colleagues and wider Great North Children’s Hospital team.

Katie McDougall
Always seeking out opportunities to improve people’s treatments and experience, Katie, a senior sister, set up an ambulatory care service in the Northern Centre for Cancer Care to explore delivering chemotherapy to patients from the comfort of their own homes.

It was well received by patients and in the last 12 months has reduced bed days by over 300, as well as helping to relieve pressure on inpatient wards in the centre.

Katie has used her skills from her previous role to also prescribe and clinically assess patients, alleviating pressure on junior doctors and making this a complete standalone nurse-led service.

Her dedication has enabled her to set up the first fully ambulatory autologous stem cell transplant service in the country and with this ambulatory service just two years in and going from strength to strength, it is incredibly exciting to continue to see it grow and expand.
Lucia Pareja-Cebrian

As an Associate Medical Director and the Trust’s Director of Infection Prevention and Control in the run-up to – and throughout the pandemic – Lucia’s oversight and leadership from the front has been fundamental in helping to get Newcastle Hospitals through a tough couple of years.

Her proactive influence and calming presence has been a constant source of reassurance for staff, enabling them to work in the knowledge that their safety – and our patients – is paramount.

From producing comprehensive guidance (and adapting it as circumstances changed), sourcing additional PPE, overseeing staff testing and screening and helping to transform wards to accommodate COVID-19 patients – Lucia has been an ever-present force who continues to lead by example.

The first words and last words of her nomination simply read: “Lucia is one of those humans you so often wish for but so rarely get….and her kindness and compassion will never be forgotten.”
Jacqueline Gunn

The lasting impact that staff can have on patients and family members isn’t always recognised publicly but will always be remembered. This nomination for Jacqueline, a specialist airway nurse, came from a mum whose baby son had just had an emergency tracheostomy.

Alone, due to covid restrictions, and struggling to process the devastating news, mum met Jacqueline for the first time who was “caring and kind and quietly sat down to answer my millions of questions.’

From that day, Jacqueline has been described as a rock, providing training and support which has given the parents the skills and knowledge to safely care for their son. However, this was not a straightforward journey and further complications meant there was a strong possibility they could lose their son.

But Jacqueline didn’t give up, spending hours researching alternative tracheostomies, contacting American and UK suppliers as well as every single specialist hospital in the UK, to ultimately order a custom-made product which she then trained consultants, nursing staff, community team and the family to use.

Even when this little boy had his tracheostomy successfully removed, she remained involved in his care offering support and was there through surgical procedures. “Jacqueline has taken the time to listen to us as a family and really get to know our son - she treats us with respect and takes our views on board – I hope she gets this recognition she deserves.”
Amanda Kilsby

As a relatively new head of department for older people’s medicine, Amanda has guided the team through an incredibly difficult time, whilst also implementing significant positive change in a department facing its own staffing and recruitment challenges.

After the tragic death of a colleague, she personally provided pastoral support to her staff including making herself accessible and available overseas when visiting family she hadn’t seen for two years, as well as leading on Trust arrangements for a service to remember them.

Amanda has helped mitigate consultant staffing issues and supported the wards through the creation of new roles, including physician associate posts, while always looking at new ways of working, including developing a “comprehensive geriatric assessment” clinic at the Freeman Hospital/Belsay to ensure patients can access a specialist outpatient service.

A champion of older people’s medicine, she has established a frailty steering group and is striving to ensure a culture of support with the department which has been incredibly well received.
Catering team
Day after day, this stretched team work tirelessly across Newcastle Hospitals to ensure our patients and staff are fed and watered and the importance of their role within an organisation of our size is often under-estimated.

They have gone above and beyond during – and after – the pandemic to address the catering needs of staff, starting with packed lunch services to extending bistro openings at the RVI, developing food to go apps, opening Bank Holidays and supporting events such as Ramadan, Big Tea and the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

The culmination of this has been the opening of the Leazes Wing staff bistro to provide hot food for our teams working during the nights and weekend shifts, all of which has been done on top of supporting patient recovery through their meals service and feeding our workforce.

Chaplaincy team
Universally held in high esteem by those receiving their help or people whose paths they simply cross, the chaplaincy team are there (often at short notice) and willing to be that ‘shoulder’ to lean on – whether you are ‘religious’ or not.

A multi-faith team from across the region, they provide emotional, psychological and physical support not only to patients and their relatives but also to our staff and have been instrumental in setting up many staff health and wellbeing initiatives to ensure assistance is always there for someone who needs it.

The team also have responsibilities on many groups and committees across the Trust, ensuring the staff and patient voice is heard at every level of the organisation.
ICHNE - Lighthouse lab team (HR / Education Workforce Development)

It is remarkable to think what this team achieved in such a short space of time to enable the opening of the Integrated Covid Hub North East Lighthouse Lab in March 2021.

HR support was central to a huge recruitment drive in local communities, specifically targeting diverse and under-represented groups, generating around 750 new jobs in the public sector to help support the region’s testing response to the pandemic.

Working alongside them were EWD colleagues who carried out a comprehensive training needs analysis and bespoke onboarding programme (and later an outboarding programme as the country moved into a new phase of ‘living with covid’ and testing diminished), as well as providing continual support to the workforce throughout the time the lab was open and during the redundancy phase.

The efforts of the team in initiating a transformative approach to workforce supply are truly inspiring and reflective of the Trust’s values.

Finance department

There’s a saying there is no ‘I’ in teamwork and that’s so true of this department, who were nominated in their entirety for keeping the financial cogs of Newcastle Hospitals turning.

The ever-changing NHS landscape means the team has had to be flexible enough to react to our organisation’s ever-changing needs and the last two and half years have stretched this to new limits as they responded to a hugely complex financial environment during a pandemic, which needed continuous and detailed planning and management.

Every individual provides the financial support, creativity and checks and balances necessary to ensure that services can operate effectively and this, coupled with managing to remain in balance despite the challenges faced across the NHS and locally, is testament to the department’s sheer hard work.

There is no area of the Trust this team does not reach and without them, we would simply not function.
Emergency Department

Despite unprecedented demand, increased complexity of patients and regional pressures leading to frequent diverts, this team work tirelessly, showing incredible resilience and camaraderie, 24/7, 365 days a year.

They are – and continue to be – exceptionally busy but still have some of the best ambulance handover times in the UK, outstanding clinical outcomes and excellent patient feedback – a reflection of how knitted together they are as a team.

Compassion, calmness and care are the first experiences someone receives when they come into the department and that sets the tone for the rest of their pathway through Newcastle Hospitals. The department – like some of our other finalists – received several nominations but perhaps this best sums them up...

“Everyone is passionate in delivering care, you can see it in their eyes behind the masks even in chaotic life and death situations. Basically, you could say they are the SAS or Marines of the NHS – prepared for everything.”

0-19 School nursing service supporting children in homeless accommodation

What began as a three-month pilot during a pandemic lockdown, has now become a vital service and resource for Newcastle’s most vulnerable children and young people...

A team of two senior school nurses offered over 40 health assessments to support children in homeless accommodation and very quickly identified that the gap of health provision for these families’ children and young people of school age was huge.

Issues of healthy weight, emotional health, immunisation status, dental health and vision were all identified as public health priorities and the nurses worked with families and housing officers to ensure they were supported with a plan of care using a ‘whole family’ support model.

This is now a permanent service with the full school nurse team supporting the health needs of children and young people at a very difficult and often traumatic period in their lives.
Senior clinical teams from peri-operative & critical care

The pandemic has posed unprecedented healthcare system challenges – challenges many teams have risen to leading to transformative change.

By working as a collective through extremely testing times, the senior teams in peri-operative and critical care have planned and managed their services across the Freeman and the RVI to ensure our sickest patients always received the highest standards of care.

Staff were trained and moved from theatres, anaesthetics and recovery to work in critical care, enabling us to increase capacity to meet the growing numbers of covid patients who needed us, whilst maintaining emergency and urgent surgery on both sites.

As demand grew, they adapted working with other teams and always with a supportive shoulder for colleagues, and they extended that support nationally, receiving acutely ill patients from overwhelmed hospitals in other parts of the country.

Older persons and acute medicine – ward sisters’ team – Freeman Hospital

Courage, commitment and passion are just some of the words used to describe how the sisters’ team managed the pressures and challenges of a pandemic on wards 9 and 13 to 18 at the Freeman.

A lynchpin for patients, relatives and their own colleagues, often during times of critical staffing, they have worked innovatively together when wards had to be flipped to covid ones – then back again – and turned ‘outbreaks’ into learning opportunities, resulting in some of the best levels of COVID risk assessments in the Trust.

This team work tirelessly to ensure patient safety and reduction of patient harm is always their top priority and as well as sharing their weekly experiences and ‘top tips’ to maintain high standards, they have introduced many patient initiatives and projects to support hydration, gold standards of palliative care and support for carers.

Their pride in their teams – including their extended family of international nurses – really shines through to create a ‘family’ atmosphere that welcomes everyone into their wards.
COVID-19 Vaccination Programme for the North East and North Cumbria

Newcastle Hospitals led this programme and the team set out to fly the flag for the largest ICS region despite complex geography, multiple partners and high deprivation, as well as the unprecedented pace and scale of the task.

This wasn’t just about delivering vaccines – although almost 7million doses were given across the region. Agile programme management, excellent data and compassionate leadership were key to mobilise resources to support local activities and gain a deeper understanding of seldom heard groups and their needs.

As a result, solid networks were established for strong future partnership working and (in agreement with local partners), over 350 vaccination locations were made available through the national or local booking systems. This included seven large vaccination sites, 69 primary care networks, 254 community pharmacy locations, 19 hospital hubs and eight mobile services.

The programme’s success was built on the premise that ‘no single partner, person or place was more important than any other’ – and the team acknowledges the huge amount of effort and input from Primary Care Networks (PCNs), community pharmacies, schools, NHS organisations, local vaccination boards and numerous voluntary sector organisations and fire and rescue services.
Chairman’s Award & Chief Executive’s Award

We also have two special awards – the Chairman’s Award and the Chief Executive’s Award – which will be presented at the end of the evening.
Starter

Warm leek & gruyere cheese tart with homemade spiced tomato chutney (v)

Main course

Pan-fried breast of chicken with the classic hunter’s sauce of mushrooms, tarragon, tomatoes & shallots

Spinach & ricotta cannelloni baked with a tomato ragout with finished with scamorza (v)

Dessert

Eton “tidy” cheesecake with strawberry & black pepper drizzle & Chantilly cream (v)