

LHCH matters

The newsletter for our patients,
staff and communities of Liverpool
Heart and Chest Hospital

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LHCH performs first congenital heart disease treatment in the North West

LHCH has successfully performed the first Harmony™ Transcatheter Pulmonary Valve implantation in the North West of England.

This landmark procedure represents an important advancement in the treatment of selected patients with congenital heart disease, offering a minimally invasive alternative to repeat open-heart surgery.

The procedure was performed by a multidisciplinary team including consultants Dr Salim Jivanji, Dr Arvind Balaji and Dr Shreesha Maiya, together with fellow Dr Mohamed Saber,

supported by specialist nursing, imaging, anaesthetic and catheter laboratory teams.

This achievement reflects LHCH's ongoing commitment to innovation and excellence in congenital and structural heart interventions, helping to expand access to cutting-edge treatments for patients across the region.

Liverpool Pulmonary Rehabilitation service achieves national accreditation

We are delighted to share that our Liverpool Pulmonary Rehabilitation service, which provides the Breathe Programme at LHCH, has achieved national accreditation.

The Breathe Programme is an eight-week long exercise and education rehabilitation programme for people in Liverpool who have long term lung conditions such as COPD, bronchiectasis, pulmonary fibrosis or asthma.

The accreditation was awarded by the Royal College of Physicians, which assessed services to ensure they have demonstrated and met best practice standards such as quality, safety, patient experience and workforce.

It provides further reassurance for LHCH patients, and their families, that the team are providing the highest quality service possible, whilst also

following the recommended guidance for pulmonary rehabilitation services across the country.

Hannah Platt, Physiotherapist and Team Leader for the Liverpool Pulmonary Rehabilitation service, spoke of this achievement: "We are so pleased the service has been recognised in this way. The team have worked incredibly hard over the last two years, in the lead up to this accreditation, and everyone has played a key part in making this happen."

"During this time, we have made a whole host of improvements to develop the service further. For example, we evaluated the venue facilities we had, to enable us to offer additional classes. We now provide evening sessions which makes the programme even more accessible



to patients. We have also introduced new assessment equipment and have implemented better processes so that the service can run seamlessly.

"Knowing that you offer a higher quality service is really rewarding and has enhanced staff experience. It also brings about more opportunity for further service development.

"I'm really proud of the team who

Cardiac surgery school launched for patients at LHCH

LHCH patients and their families were welcomed to attend cardiac surgery school for the first time on 2nd June 2026.



Cardiac surgery school is a free, optional surgical preparation programme designed to help patients prepare mentally and physically for their heart surgery.

Heart surgery can feel overwhelming, and the session was designed to alleviate concerns by providing information from different members of the team who provide care throughout the patient journey. This included the perspective of a cardiac surgeon, anaesthetist, intensive care doctor and nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist, dietician, occupational therapist, speech therapist, and surgical secretary.

Attendees were also offered the opportunity to ask any questions they had and to have a guided tour of the

hospital to familiarise themselves with the hospital environment.

Consultant Anaesthetist, Dr Melissa Evans and Dr Steve Cai, Senior Fellow – Anaesthetics who developed the programme said:

"We are thrilled with how the first session went. The feedback received so far has been positive and there seems to be an appetite for more

cardiac surgery school events to run in the future!

"Thank you to all the speakers that supported the educational talks and helped support the patients and families that attended.

"Details of future opportunities to attend the cardiac surgery school programme will be communicated soon so please watch this space."

First laser assisted lung cancer surgery performed at LHCH

We are thrilled to share that the first laser assisted lung cancer surgery in Cheshire and Merseyside was performed at LHCH on 24th June.

The laser makes it possible to remove more complex and harder to reach tumours, where operating may not have been an option previously.

Mr Julius Asante Siaw, Consultant Thoracic Surgeon and Clinical Lead for Thoracic Surgery, spoke of this significant advancement in treatment:

"I'm delighted we can now offer laser assisted surgery to benefit more lung cancer patients here at LHCH. This will enable us to successfully, and more easily, treat patients with a more complex diagnosis.

"At Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital, we have one of the busiest specialist thoracic surgical units in the country. A large proportion of thoracic surgery is involved in the diagnosis and treatment

of cancers such as lung cancer and mesothelioma. We are so proud to be able to innovate and develop this service further, with the introduction of this new laser assisted technique, to provide the very best patient outcomes.

"With our sincere thanks to LHCH Charity and the Marina Dalglish Appeal for making the purchase of the new Limax Laser possible."



LHCH Thoracic Surgeons, Mr Julius Asante Siaw and Mr Michael Shackcloth are pictured with Mr Apostolos Nakas, Consultant Surgeon from Glenfield Hospital, University Hospitals of Leicester, Emma Long, LHCH Theatre Lead for Thoracic Surgery, Julie Kelly, Surgical Endoscopy and Decontamination Lead for LHCH and the specialist team who performed the first lung cancer procedure with the Limax Laser.

MEET THE SPECIALIST

For this instalment of *Meet the Specialist*, we were fortunate to meet the exceptionally humble **Mr Andrew Muir, Consultant Cardiac Surgeon and Clinical Lead for Cardiac Surgery**. Mr Muir has an international reputation for excellence in cardiac (heart) surgery and a special interest in off pump cardiac surgery, mitral, coronary and minimally invasive surgery.



Mr Andrew Muir

A career in medicine

Asked how his career journey began and why he chose a career in medicine and ultimately cardiac surgery, Mr Muir said: "An ex-girlfriend wanted to be a doctor, and I thought I could do that! Annoyingly I hadn't done Biology GCSE, which I needed to study medicine at university in Belfast, and so I ended up having to do this at a local polytechnic at night as it wouldn't fit into my school timetable.

"I always knew I wanted to be a surgeon. Initially I thought I would do general surgery, and I worked in a tiny hospital in Downpatrick. This was great experience for my first year because we got to cover loads of different operations. I went on to do thoracic surgery, which I enjoyed, but I moved

on to do cardiac surgery in 1999 and I loved that even more. I modified my basic surgical training to be solely cardiothoracic; got my first registrar job in 2001 and the rest, as they say, is history."

The career journey to LHCH

To begin with, Mr Muir worked in a small hospital based 'in the sticks' in Belfast. He explained why he put the countryside aside for the city life here in Liverpool:

"I met a trainee from Liverpool at a conference in Hamburg, Germany. He told me that LHCH performed off pump coronary artery bypass surgery, which was a speciality I was, and still am, very interested in. At that point, I

contacted LHCH to express an interest in a trainee role and a year later Mr Brian Fabri, a now-retired consultant cardiac surgeon, contacted me to let me know a registrar opportunity had become available. Soon after, I was in Liverpool meeting Mr Mark Pullan, Consultant Cardiac Surgeon, who has also now retired. I got the job, but the day after my visit I broke my leg, so I didn't start until six months later.

"I started at LHCH in February 2011, and the plan was to get broader experience here for one year and then go back to Belfast. That didn't happen and I got a locum consultant post in 2012 which became permanent shortly after. I've now been here for fifteen years."

Specialist in cardiac surgery

Talking about his main areas of expertise, Mr Muir shared: "I call myself a coronary, mitral and minimally invasive surgeon. I do some niche work too, such as cardio-oncology and septal hypertrophy surgery.

"LHCH has an extensive team of consultants who each have greater skill in specific areas of surgery enabling them to become true experts in their field. Together, as a decent-sized team, we can effectively serve the population well."

One of Mr Muir's main specialisms is off pump coronary bypass grafting, which is also known as beating heart surgery. This is a less common alternative to performing coronary artery bypass grafting, a treatment for coronary artery disease, when a small section of the heart can be immobilised and operated on whilst the rest of the heart continues to beat underneath.

Traditional coronary artery bypass grafting operations use a cardiopulmonary bypass machine to do the job of the heart and lungs, stopping the heart for the duration of the procedure. LHCH is the highest volume centre for this type of technique in the UK.

Mr Muir said: "I've completed over 1,000 of these cases now and I am a proctor to mentor, train, support and

supervise other doctors in this type of surgery at LHCH, across the UK and Europe. I've done this over the last decade.

"We have a strong mitral team at LHCH. About 15% of all our heart operations have a mitral component so we perform around 300 a year. We also have a minimally invasive mitral programme which offers benefits such as reduced recovery time and lower risk of complications. I tend to pick up cases that aren't suitable for this surgery and tend to be more complex. For example, a patient may need a bypass grafting and mitral valve surgery which would come to me."

"We have run a programme of minimally invasive aortic valve replacement surgery over the past eight years. Initially it was just me who did this surgery, but now we have six trained consultants, most of whom I taught. LHCH exceeds national levels for operating on aortic valves using a minimally invasive technique and we have plans for this to rise further.

"We also offer minimally invasive multi-vessel coronary artery surgery which has been performed here for three and a half years now since I started the programme. A small number of centres across the UK use this less invasive technique for this operation, but many are not

concentrating on multi-vessel.

"Nationally, only 3% of these cases have been completed this way, which we are already matching. I've trained two of my consultant colleagues and so now there are three surgeons doing this technique. Our programme is unique, as many centres just have one surgeon who can do these procedures, so we're fortunate to have such a dedicated team.

"I also provide a septal service for patients with hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy, and I will also be training a colleague in this area. I also support the regional cardio-oncology service for patients with heart disease and cancer, and perform carcinoid heart valve surgery for rarer heart tumours.

"I work closely with several heart teams including high risk, mitral, transcatheter and cardio-oncology. Participating in these important multi-disciplinary team meetings with professionals from across the UK helps ensure that LHCH offers high-quality services for all our patients, whether they need surgery or other treatment. We offer supra-regional services across the North of England as these are highly complex procedures in some of these niche areas."

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LHCH surgery colleagues at the Society for Cardiothoracic Surgery Annual Meeting in March 2026.

MEET THE SPECIALIST

Developments in cardiac surgery

When asked about changes in care and treatment of cardiac surgery over the years, Mr Muir explained: “We all use more arterial grafts than we used to. They are preferred in coronary artery bypass surgery because they last longer than traditional vein grafts.

“Perioperative care has improved, including prehabilitation and anaesthetic techniques, which has meant faster recovery for patients.

“We are moving to a greater proportion of cardiac surgery carried out less invasively. This is still not widespread, but the outcomes are excellent. For example, 17% of mitral valve surgery is carried out less invasively nationally. At LHCH, we do more than this with more than one surgeon trained in this technique.

“Less invasive aortic valve and coronary artery surgery will follow and continue to rise. We will have multiple surgeons trained on these techniques, so it offers great promise for our patients who are able to go home much sooner after this treatment. It’s going to make a real difference to many. It’s technically challenging and not every patient will be suitable, but it will make a big difference.”

Shaping future surgeons

Incredibly modest when discussing his achievements, Mr Muir shared: “I’m pleased that over half of my operations last year were performed using less invasive surgery, which has had a positive impact on patient outcomes.

“Being able to support and develop cardiac surgeons for the future has been rewarding. I’m a good trainer and proud of this. For example, I’ve been involved in thirteen training programmes in the last three years with a variety of consultant learning agreements and it’s a pleasure to be involved in improving the skill set of colleagues. This is on top of having trained a wide range of resident doctors over the years and being fortunate enough to have received a number of training awards from the Mersey Deanery.

“It’s important to me, that when I retire, I don’t leave a gap of expertise

behind. Developing trainees is crucial so that a legacy is left behind.”

Research is key for the patients of tomorrow

Asked what he was most proud of discussing the importance of research in making improvements to future care, Mr Muir explained: “Research is vital. Ten years ago, a colleague, Bil Kirmani and I did a significant research study focused on off-pump cardiac surgery at LHCH. This was the biggest single site study in the literature to date, which we published in an important medical journal called *Circulation*. The results were impactful.

“The hope is to do more similar studies in the future because it makes such an impact on patient outcomes and experience. I’m really pleased to have been involved and in helping to ensure LHCH continues to be a research leader.”

The future of heart surgery

The future certainly looks bright for cardiac surgery services at LHCH. Asked to share his hopes and plans, Mr Muir added: “Less invasive surgery is the way forward as this can help us treat a greater volume of patients and improve productivity.



Mr Muir with his operating team in theatres

“It’s innovative, enables better outcomes for patients and is cost effective. For example, many patients can go home three days post-surgery instead of six. Fewer days in hospital is obviously better for the patient, and it means we have space to treat more patients. I can do two of these minimally invasive surgery operations per day so there is real scope to reduce waiting times and provide the treatment that patients need quicker.

“Coronary artery surgery is our most common operation and so the opportunity for greater productivity and less waiting time, if we increase the proportion we complete minimally invasively, is greatest here. We receive enquiries from outside our catchment area from patients who are willing to travel for this specialist care.”

Outside of work

Asked about his interests outside of work, Mr Muir admits he has a keen interest in light and speaks warmly about his collection of lava lamps and unusual lightbulbs. He also enjoys cooking for family and friends on his self-built pizza oven in the garden, which he admits he spent a lot of time building from scratch with over 3 tonnes of bricks, firebricks and cement!

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION NEWS

Celebrating research at LHCH

Research colleagues marked International Clinical Trials Day on 20th May, with events and activities at all sites across University Hospitals of Liverpool Group.

Group Chief Nurse, David Melia, and Jen Taylor, Director of Nursing, joined LHCH teams to find out more about clinical trials and how they can make a huge difference to patient care. Here are some of our key research statistics from 2025:

- 105 research studies
- 32 studies opened
- 1,074 participants consented to research
- Top 3 specialities – Cardiovascular, Respiratory and Cancer



LHCH is a Research Active Trust

LHCH perfusionist shares research findings on world stage

We are pleased to share that James Bennett, Lead Perfusionist at LHCH presented impactful research findings at the world’s largest perfusion conference. The ‘Sanibel Symposium’ took place in Bonita Springs, Florida in the United States of America on 6-9 May.

Clinical Perfusionists are healthcare scientists. Based in our operating theatres the team provides essential clinical perfusion cover enabling life-saving heart surgery to take place.

At the symposium, James presented two talks and sat on a discussion panel of experts to present findings from our Kidney Research UK-funded HaemoAKI study that is investigating the role of blood damage in Acute Kidney Injury following heart

surgery. The aim of the research is to develop improved methods to prevent kidney injury after surgery.

James spoke of the opportunity to share learning on an international stage: “It was a great experience and invaluable to meet like-minded perfusionists and researchers from across the world, who are also focussed on improving perfusion practices and enhancing patient care.

“Highlights for me were conversing with people from as far away as Australia, and as close to home as



James (left) participating in the discussion panel.

Manchester. It’s amazing how so many people are working on similar topics, and bringing people together provides plenty of opportunities for collaboration. We already have several ideas for how we can work together on research in the near future.”

LHCH researcher awarded Editorial Award at national conference

Congratulations to Dr Justin Chiong (centre), Honorary Research Fellow

in Cardiac Electrophysiology, who was awarded the Editorial Award at this year’s British Cardiovascular Society Annual Conference, held early June, for his published article on ‘Ventricular Tachycardia: Past, Present and Future’.



Earlier this year Justin was awarded a Clinical Research Training Fellowship by the British Heart Foundation. This

is an impressive achievement and even more so as it’s the first time a fellowship of its kind has been awarded to a researcher at LHCH.

The prestigious grant will provide the funding for the research costs and consumables necessary to deliver the DYNAMITE-VT study. The DYNAMITE-VT study aims to improve the way we treat Ventricular Tachycardia (VT) for our patients, we hope that by better guiding ablation, we can reduce recurrence, hospitalisation, the need to redo procedures, and defibrillator shocks for patients.



Mr Ahmed Othman, Consultant Cardiac and Aortic Surgeon.



LHCH staff star in inclusive lung cancer screening film

The LHCH Lung Cancer Screening team, along with teams from across NHS University Hospitals of Liverpool Group, have recently taken part in a project designed to support people with learning disabilities to know more about the importance of cancer screening.

Made in collaboration with People First Merseyside, a self-advocacy organisation run by, and for, people with learning disabilities, the series



of videos entitled 'Check It Out', walk the viewer through the importance of cancer screening, including bowel, breast, cervical and lung, as well as the process of attending screening appointments and what this involves.

The videos, premiered at a special screening event at Crosby's Plaza Cinema, featured members of People First Merseyside, alongside real clinicians from the respective screening services in the local area.

Paula McCann Finney, Nursing Team Leader from the Lung Cancer Screening service at LHCH, who starred in the lung cancer film, said: "It was a privilege to be asked to be part of these films which aim to support people with learning disabilities to make informed choices about cancer screening.

"Having seen the videos, they would be helpful for anyone who wants to know more about why cancer screening is important and what is involved. The message is clear, go for your cancer screening and 'check it out!'"

You can watch the videos by visiting www.uhliverpool.nhs.uk/about-us/our-stories/uhl-group-staff-star-inclusive-cancer-screening-films

11th International Aortic Symposium held in Liverpool

The 11th International Aortic Symposium was held here in Liverpool during Aortic Week commencing 1st June 2026.

The symposium, hosted every two-years by LHCH, saw like-minded experts join from across the world to

share key learning and developments in all aspects of aortic disease.

LHCH is the premier centre for Aortic Surgery in the North of the UK. Professor Mark Field, Divisional Medical Director Surgery and Consultant Aortic Surgeon said: "We were delighted to welcome a range of

eminent experts with an international reputation to contribute to exciting lectures and discussions reviewing key aspects and recent developments in the field of aortic surgery.

"The Liverpool Aortic Symposium first took place in 2008 and has been a great opportunity to share learning,

advancements in treatment and best practice. It has been truly invaluable in developing the aortic surgery specialism to what we know today – making a positive impact to patient care both here in Liverpool and across the world."

'Life with a Device' sessions make a real difference

"I was so terrified after I had my first ICD fitted. Attending the 'Life with a Device' session made a massive difference and allayed my fears".

They were the words of a patient who attended one of our popular 'Life with a Device' engagement events for patients and families here at LHCH.

The quarterly sessions were introduced in 2017, by Dr Archie Rao, Consultant Cardiologist, to create a supportive educational forum for patients who had just had their first Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) implanted.

An ICD is a small, battery-powered device placed under the skin of your chest that constantly monitors your heart rate. If it detects dangerously fast, irregular rhythms (arrhythmias), it delivers electrical pulses or a shock to restore a normal heartbeat and prevent sudden cardiac arrest.

The aim of the series was to bring patients and families together with healthcare professionals in an informal environment to access information, ask questions and feel better supported in managing their condition.

Rachel Goode, Heart Failure Lead Nurse, explained how these sessions had exceeded all expectations: "What began as a quality improvement project has grown into a well-established series

of events which are supported by a range of clinical colleagues offering differing expertise.

"We are delighted to have received excellent feedback from our patients and families which demonstrates the true value of providing education, reassurance, and peer support outside of routine clinic appointments. We are so pleased that the LHCH Charity has continued to support and make these events possible."

Dr Archie Rao, Consultant Cardiologist (pictured), who pioneered the sessions said: "I'm proud of how the event has evolved and continued to grow over the years.

"Most importantly, it gives us the opportunity to engage with patients and their

families, both as a group and on a one-to-one basis, supporting them throughout their ICD journey. Seeing the positive impact this has on patients' understanding, confidence and experience of living with an ICD makes all the hard work worthwhile.

"I am also proud of one of our patients, Steve, who shared his story with us several years ago. We enjoy sharing his video at every one of our events and all our patients and families value his personal story and experience so much."

Patients receive an event invitation, by post, after their first ICD implant or from the Cardiac Rehabilitation or ICD clinic teams. The next event is September 17th, 2026. If any patients, who have recently had an ICD implant, wish to attend, they can contact our pathway co-ordinator Leane by calling **0151 600 1802**.

You can find out more on the ICD section of www.lhch.nhs.uk



CYSTIC FIBROSIS FOCUS

As part of Cystic Fibrosis Week, 8-14th June 2026, we want to introduce you to Stacey who was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis at just ten months old.

Stacey's story

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is one of the UK's most common life-threatening inherited diseases. It is caused by a defective gene and as a result, the internal organs, especially the lungs and digestive system become clogged with thick sticky mucus resulting in chronic infections and inflammation in the lungs and difficulty digesting food. It often requires life-long specialist hospital care and treatment which Stacey, from Winsford, has experienced first-hand.

When Stacey was born, motherly instincts convinced her mum that something wasn't right. Her newborn hadn't had a solid nappy yet and her concerns eventually led to Stacey's diagnosis with cystic fibrosis. Heartbreakingly she was told that the outlook for Stacey was bleak, and it was unlikely she would live past her teenage years.

However, Stacey is now 43 years old and shared: "Mum always brought us up to be positive. If there are hurdles in the way then go round them, if not over them. Therefore, I've always normalised having cystic fibrosis. My mum taught me how to be strong as she feared for my future, so being strong was the only way she knew how to protect me. My

mum is the reason I am who I am today, I shall forever be grateful to her for that."

Advances in the care and treatment of cystic fibrosis, including availability of the new 'miracle' drug Kaftrio has meant the outlook for some people with cystic fibrosis is far brighter now.

Stacey said: "I had my first chest infection when I was 13. I'd mainly had stomach problems up to that point. It hit me like a ton of bricks having to have my first IV to deliver antibiotics.

"When I was 17, I was transferred to Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital. I had a healthy pregnancy with my first son and went over to Liverpool Women's Hospital when I was 18 for his safe arrival.

"Soon after, I got married to my husband John and we had our second child. My pregnancy was much harder than the first and I struggled with back pain and chest infections. After the birth, I was back at LHCH to see the team and physiotherapists who helped me.

"In 2019, my health declined, the infections were harder to treat, and I was suffering with my breathing so much that I was on oxygen permanently. I was treated palliatively to relieve the pain and manage the symptoms. I couldn't do anything.

"I was then faced with Guillain-Barre Syndrome which meant I was paralysed from the chest downwards, and I also



Stacey celebrating her birthday on Cherry Ward

lost a lot of control in my hands. I spent over six months in hospital at LHCH at this time. My husband never left my side.

"It was then that I was offered Kaftrio on compassionate grounds - a long-term treatment for people with cystic fibrosis. I thought I had nothing to lose and gave it a try.

"I slowly started to pick up. I came off oxygen. I was able to learn to walk again and master basic things we all take for granted, like holding a glass so I could have a drink.

"When I went home initially, I was tube fed overnight, it was my husband that did all of those feeds alongside all of the other treatment I still have to have. It was a really hard time for us all but particularly for

my family who cared for me during the darkest of times. Gradually I started to feel I could live again, and my symptoms became more manageable. So much so that we were able to go to Disneyland as a family last year, which was magical."

Stacey says she still spends a lot of time in hospital at LHCH.

"It's always been a home from home experience. The team in Cherry Ward, the dedicated cystic fibrosis ward, are literally like our family.

"My two children have almost been brought up around the amazing nurses who dedicate themselves to patients and families like us. They make everyone feel comfortable, no matter what they're going through.

"My boys are adults themselves now and still have a great relationship with the staff they have grown up with and treat them like family. We almost see NHS staff more than our blood family, but the bond is for life, no matter how long that is.

"I can't ever put into words how much we appreciate the care given at LHCH and on Cherry Ward. Every single member of staff always goes above and beyond. They're all amazing and I owe my life to them.

"I've spent many special occasions as an inpatient, and it isn't just my family who celebrate with me, it's my extended family of staff that always make sure they bring a smile to my face.

"I've even woken up on the ward and my room has been decorated by them. Lately I have spent more time on Cherry Ward than I have at home, but it's just like visiting my other family for a holiday again. They really do make you feel loved and cared for - they're the best."



Stacey with some of the Cherry Ward team celebrating her 43rd birthday last year.



Some of the CF team pictured on Cherry Ward.

Celebrating 10 years of Cherry Ward

Ten years ago, we celebrated the official opening of Cherry Ward by Sir Bruce Keogh, former National Medical Director at NHS England.

Cherry Ward is a ten-bed facility at LHCH dedicated for the care and treatment of people with Cystic Fibrosis (CF).

LHCH provides specialist adult CF services for Merseyside, Cheshire, North Wales and further afield.

The re-developed environment in Cherry Ward, unveiled on 13th May 2016, ensured the ward was fully in line with national guidance providing individual side rooms, en-suite facilities, a comfortable seating area and modern 'home from home' facilities.

Laura Allen, Ward Manager of Cherry Ward spoke of this milestone:

"For the past ten years, Cherry Ward has provided dedicated compassionate, patient-centered care for people living with Cystic Fibrosis. Every aspect of our care is guided by our patients - their experiences, challenges and goals. We strive to ensure

their care is not only clinically excellent but truly individualised. This milestone reflects the strong relationships built between our patients and their families with our team. We understand that being in hospital can be challenging, so we strive to make our ward a place where patients feel comfortable, respected and truly cared for as individuals. It is a privilege to lead such a dedicated and caring team who go above and beyond. Their commitment makes a real difference to every patient who comes through our door."



Former Cherry Ward Manager, Sandra Wilson with Sir Bruce Keogh at the official opening in 2016.

PATIENT STORIES

Pat's story

62 year old Pat, from Wirral, was in North Wales last year when a sudden fainting episode led to the discovery of a heart murmur and the need for heart valve surgery.

Pat said: "I'd never fainted before and haven't fainted since, but I ended up on the ground unconscious."

"A few days later after speaking with my GP, I was invited for an ECG, which thankfully was fine and showed that I hadn't had a heart attack. However, they did find a heart murmur and decided to refer me for some extra tests at Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital, which showed that I needed a valve replacement.

"By the time I met my consultant cardiac surgeon, Mr Jakub Marczak, my head was spinning. I had so many questions, and I wondered what life would be like afterwards. However, he was so reassuring and all my worries washed away. He explained everything clearly, including the reasons why he needed to do it and the benefits to me.

"I said to the surgeon because I'm retired, if you ever get a cancellation I can be here straight away. Amazingly, just a week later the surgeon called and said we can operate tomorrow.

Pat immediately came into LHCH to get settled into the ward, and said everything happened so quickly.

"I was wheeled off to theatre for surgery and after a night in the post operative critical care unit, the next thing I knew I was back on the ward with my own room. The service was brilliant, and the staff were always on top of everything. The way the nurses and staff all worked together was so professional.



Unfortunately for Pat, he had to spend his 62nd birthday in hospital at LHCH, but he said that even this experience was made memorable by all the staff.

"Every time a member of staff saw you, they asked for your name and date of birth, and on the Wednesday morning before I had to go to the Cath Lab, they realised it was my birthday.

"They were so nice in putting happy birthday posters up on the wall and even brought me a little Mr Kipling cake. Then as I arrived for my procedure later in the day, they said, "Oh, it's your birthday!"

"One of the staff said 'warm up your voices, we've got a birthday boy', and the next thing, they had Paul McCartney and then Stevie Wonder singing in the background while they're operating on my shoulder. It was all over within an hour and the staff were just amazing.

"I realised quite soon that I was making good progress and felt so confident that I could be discharged home and not worry about a single thing."



Pat gifting keychains to LHCH staff.

Since going home, Pat's recovery has gone from strength to strength.

"As soon as I got home, I was able to look after myself without any issues. Obviously, I couldn't do the gardening and the shopping, but general day-to-day living was unbelievable. I had no post-operative blues and honestly, I just feel so good."

Since retiring, Pat has remained active – exploring the country in his campervan, taking up open water swimming and sewing.

Pat says: "Swimming has been a big hobby for the past 5 years and I love travelling the UK meeting up with different swimming groups, whether it be in the sea, rivers, lakes or under waterfalls. I'm also involved in my local group at Leasowe Bay.

"Then about 18 months ago I was taught how to sew, which I've loved. One of the things I've learned to make is keychains and I decided to start giving them out to people I met on my travels.

"They've been so popular that I decided to try and give as many as I could to staff at LHCH as a token of my appreciation for everything they do, and I'm working on some new ones for the LHCH Charity team.

If you have been an LHCH patient or family member and would like to share your patient story we'd love to hear from you by emailing CorporateCommunications@lhch.nhs.uk.



Have a look at just some of our team's highlights since the last edition of this newsletter.

Employee of the Month Awards

February

Leah Ittycheria, Staff Nurse – Critical Carer

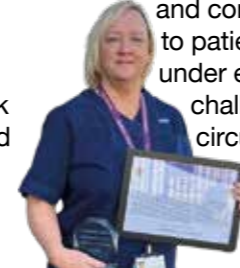
Leah was outside of work and witnessed a man collapse in the street. She immediately commenced CPR until paramedics arrived. Her quick thinking, skill and actions showed remarkable courage.



March

Lorraine Long, Rapid Response Team Leader

Lorraine was nominated for her exceptional professionalism, resilience, and commitment to patient care under extremely challenging circumstances.



April

Mr Peter Guirguis, Cardiothoracic Registrar

Peter was nominated for being consistently supportive of colleagues and always willing to help during busy periods providing emergency cover.



May

Sharon Faulkner, Lead Nurse for Knowsley Community Service

Sharon was nominated for being an incredible team leader and a 'shining example of what a nurse should be'.



Advancing in aortic care

Reeja Shibu, the first aortic nurse at LHCH funded by Aortic Dissection Charitable Trust, ran her first aortic dissection clinic at LHCH.

This marked an important step forward in specialist aortic care.

Reeja is pictured with Mr Shaneel Patel, Vascular Surgeon, Professor Mark Field, Divisional Medical Director and Aortic Surgeon, Una Ahearn, Lead Aortic Advanced Practitioner, Miss Debbie Harrington, Aortic Surgeon, and Mr Simon Neequaye, Vascular Surgeon.



Estates and Facilities Day

We celebrated National Healthcare Estates & Facilities Day on 17th June – a day that's been marked annually since 2022.

Colleagues on the day were recognised in the Estates and Facilities Awards and all welcomed to the event onsite to find out more about the role of our crucial estates and facilities teams, play games and enjoy treats! Thank you to the generous sponsors of the event for making this possible.

Nurses' Day

On 12th May, to coincide with International Nurses' Day, we celebrated the fantastic nurses we have working at LHCH and Broadgreen Hospitals.

Teams showcased their services and innovations as well as offering the chance for nursing colleagues to find out more about career development opportunities. The day was topped off nicely with the opportunity to take part in a quiz and enjoy afternoon tea!



LHCH Echo Physiologist supports development of echocardiography professionals worldwide

We are proud to share that **Stephen Qadir, Lead Echo Physiologist for Adult Congenital Heart Disease at LHCH, has been appointed by the British Society of Echocardiography (BSE) as an international representative to support colleagues transition to their career in the UK.**

Stephen started working at LHCH in 2012 to perform cardiac ultrasounds for patients that were born with heart defects.

Originally from India, Stephen has held roles across the UK and experienced first-hand the training required to be successful in his career journey.

Stephen instigated this new support

network for clinical echocardiography professionals worldwide with an idea he shared with the BSE back in 2025. Stephen said:

“I’m delighted to be able to support international colleagues with my knowledge, experience and expertise on UK practice and accreditation.

“It can be a challenge for international colleagues moving to the UK as there are differences in settings, culture and the healthcare system.

“Having been through the transition to embark on a UK career myself, I feel passionate about providing guidance enabling professionals to flourish in their career.

“I’ve felt supported throughout my



career and at LHCH. I’m really looking forward to helping others take this step, establish themselves and grow.”



To find out more about LHCH Charity give them a ring on **0151 600 1409** or email **enquiries@lhchcharity.org.uk**

More LHCH Charity news on page 16



Rowan Suite team presented with Prestige Award

We are pleased to share that the Rowan Suite team were presented with the Private Healthcare Clinic of the Year Award by the Prestige Awards.

The Rowan Suite, located onsite at LHCH, provides a full range of outstanding heart and chest treatments and investigations for private patients including:

- Diagnostic Investigations
- Cardiology Services
- Thoracic Surgery
- Vascular Surgery
- Cardiac and Aortic Surgery
- Respiratory Medicine
- Adult Congenital Heart Disease

The judges for the Prestige Awards provided feedback on the team’s nomination: “We were particularly impressed by the team of professionals working hard every day at The Rowan Suite to ensure exceptional care across all their services. The first-class staff includes specialists across cardiology, cardiothoracic surgery and respiratory medicine. With more than 40 nationally and

internationally recognised consultants and professors, patients receive consultant-led care that is guided by the latest research, innovation and best clinical practice. This allows for highly personalised treatment plans and access to some of the most advanced procedures available in heart and chest medicine”.

You can find out more about Rowan Suite by visiting **www.therowansuite.co.uk**



Graham’s family complete cycle challenge ‘from the heart’

After suffering a heart attack in July 2025, Graham was told he needed life-saving surgery.

Following a successful quadruple bypass and a steady recovery, he wanted to give something back in recognition of the outstanding care he received at LHCH.

Joined by his family, Graham took on a 21-mile cycle around Preston Guild Wheel to raise funds for LHCH Charity. After weeks of training together, they completed the ride and raised an incredible £2,500 to help support LHCH patients and their families.

A huge thank you to Graham and his family for taking on this challenge. Their donations will help LHCH Charity continue funding projects that enhance patient care, improve patient experience and support innovation across the hospital.

Jim’s 90th birthday gift to LHCH Charity

It’s not always marathons or skydives here at LHCH Charity. Sometimes, simply celebrating a special milestone can make a real difference.

After receiving treatment and care for more than 40 years, Jim decided there was only one way he wanted to celebrate his 90th birthday. Instead of presents, he asked his family and friends to make donations to LHCH Charity.

Jim said: “If it wasn’t for the hospital, I doubt I would have seen my 80th, never mind my 90th, so I just wanted to say thank you.”

Family and friends joined Jim for a wonderful evening of celebration, with the birthday boy leading the way on the dancefloor from start to finish. A huge thank you to Jim and everyone who helped make his special day such a fantastic success. We’ll certainly be getting our dancing shoes ready for the next celebration!





LHCH
charity

Caring for people with heart and lung disease

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give them a ring on
0151 600 1409 or email
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Charity supports new innovative therapy to enhance patient recovery

For many people, a stroke or brain injury can change everyday life in an instant.

Something as simple as speaking to loved ones, asking for help, enjoying a meal or a drink, or expressing thoughts and feelings can suddenly become difficult. Supporting people as they rebuild these vital skills is an important part of rehabilitation, which is why LHCH Charity has recently funded new resources for our Speech and Language Therapy team. This includes the following:

- An Advanced Language Therapy app that provides a range of communication assessment and therapy activities tailored to individual needs. It allows patients to practise independently where appropriate, helping them regain confidence and improve their ability to communicate.
- We provided CTAR therapy balls

which are designed to support swallowing rehabilitation, helping patients work towards eating and drinking safely again. They encourage regular practice and can improve confidence, wellbeing, and a sense of control during recovery. The therapy balls will also help clinicians begin swallowing therapy earlier for patients with a tracheostomy, supporting a smoother return to eating and drinking by mouth.

As well as helping patients, these resources can support families to play a greater role in rehabilitation and provide staff with additional tools to aid recovery. Most importantly, they will help people regain confidence, independence and the everyday skills many of us take for granted, supporting a quicker return home and helping them get back to the people that matter most.



LHCH Radiology team take to the skies

In just over two months' time, 12 members of our fantastic Radiology team will be taking on an unforgettable challenge in support of LHCH Charity – a 15,000ft skydive.

Every day, the team plays a vital role in caring for patients, helping to diagnose and monitor a wide range of conditions and supporting treatment across the hospital. Now they are swapping scans for parachutes as they take on a challenge that is sure to test their nerve, all to raise funds that will help support patients and families at LHCH.

We are incredibly grateful to each and every member of the team for their commitment and enthusiasm. Taking a leap from 15,000ft is no small feat, and we are proud that they have chosen to support LHCH Charity in such a memorable way.

We wish the team the very best of luck as they prepare for their big day and will be cheering them on every step of the way.

Thank you – let's keep in touch

We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has taken the time to read our stories and share our journey.

If you'd like to receive the latest charity news, inspiring patient and supporter stories, and updates on the projects helping to enhance care at Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital, please email us at enquiries@lhchcharity.org.uk, or call us on 0151 600 1409. You can also contact us by post to FREEPOST PLUS RRLL-KSHT-ZLKE, Charity Office, Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Thomas Drive, Liverpool, L14 3PE. (No stamp required).

We'll only use your details to send you the updates you've asked for, and you can change your preferences at any time.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. We are reviewing the format and frequency of *LHCH Matters*. If you have any thoughts or feedback you would like to share please get in touch by emailing CorporateCommunications@lhch.nhs.uk