



The Walton Centre
NHS Foundation Trust

Neuromatters

Spring/Summer 2023

Excellence in Neuroscience 



A clearer image
Behind the scenes of our
Radiology service

**Supporting our
patients**
With Call 4 Concern

**A place for
everyone**
Our world class staff



“Each day we have new patients, new challenges, and we work hard to ensure they get the best care possible.”

Chloe Monk working on Horsley Intensive Care Unit

In this issue

- News** 2
The latest developments from The Walton Centre
- The right treatment at the right time** 6
How a new programme is helping neurology patients get seen quicker
- A place for everyone** 8
The varied nationalities of our staff and how they contribute our Trust
- It happened to me** 10
James’ story and how his actions will change future patients’ lives
- Q&A** 11
With Karen Satina, radiographer
- Fundraising** 12
News from The Walton Centre Charity

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Welcome to the latest issue of Neuromatters, the magazine of The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust.

In this issue we look at the Rapid Access to Neurology Assessment (RANA) programme, which is helping patients get seen quicker by neurologists, and also freeing up resources in neighbouring hospitals – a great example of collaborative working across our region for the benefit of most importantly patients, but also the wider NHS system.

There’s also news of our wonderful Staff Wellbeing Hub which was recently opened and will provide a calming space for our staff to just take a moment when needed.

We also look at the broad backgrounds of our staff who really do come from almost all corners of the globe. We’re proud to have such a multi-cultural workforce whilst at the same time rooted in our community.

We also have some great patient and fundraiser stories, which always give me inspiration and pride at the fantastic work our teams are doing across the hospital and what the impact of that really is.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

Jan Ross
Chief Executive
The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust

A place for staff support



Staff members chatting in the Wellbeing Hub

The new Staff Wellbeing Hub is now open, offering a comfortable and relaxing space for staff to get away from their workspace, access resources or just simply take some time for themselves.

Officially opened by Saffron Cordery, Deputy Chief Executive of NHS Providers, it is a newly refurbished space for staff to access information related to physical, financial, workplace, social and mental wellbeing.

Following the launch of our health and wellbeing programme 'Walton Wellbeing' in June 2022 we wanted to introduce a safe, comfortable space for staff. The Staff Wellbeing Hub will be a central point to access practical information, upcoming health and wellbeing events and will be available for Health MOTs, workshops, Menopause Cafés and much more!

The hub also recognises the support the late Jean Blevin gave to staff health and wellbeing at The Walton Centre.

Chief Executive Jan Ross said: "Prioritising the health and wellbeing of our workforce is a key priority at The Walton Centre.

"We want to ensure our staff have access to the right services and resources to support them through life's more difficult or unexpected challenges, particularly in the current cost-of-living crisis and as we navigate the post-COVID world.

"We hope the new hub builds upon our health and wellbeing programme and staff take the opportunity to enjoy the space."

Improving brain tumour care



(From left) Sam Holman, Mr Andy Brodbelt and Emma Wilby

The Walton Centre's Neuro-oncology Team has been working with colleagues across the region to improve the process for people diagnosed and treated for a brain tumour following a visit to A&E.

The Acute Oncology Nursing Team at Whiston Hospital in Prescot identified gaps in treatment for patients who attend A&E and receive a potential or confirmed diagnosis. Most brain tumour patients first present with symptoms at an A&E and there are often delays in obtaining appropriate imaging necessitating in patient stays.

A pilot project was developed with an improved pathway for patients at St Helens and Knowsley NHS Foundation Trust to receive the most appropriate treatment and/or support as quickly as possible.

After a successful pilot, the team at The Walton Centre is looking to embed the pathway and has since rolled it out at Warrington Hospital and Arroe Park Hospital, and are speaking to other hospitals in the region and national groups.

Mr Andy Brodbelt, Consultant Neurosurgeon and the lead for neuro-oncology at The Walton Centre, said: "We want to ensure that all patients diagnosed with a brain tumour across Cheshire and Merseyside have a clear initial management, rapid access to the appropriate imaging in their local trust preferably as an outpatient, leading to a complete referral and review expedited at The Walton Centre.

"Working with busy colleagues across the region's A&Es, we hope to be able to offer our expertise and specialist knowledge at The Walton Centre to provide a way forward."

Well done!

Congratulations are in order for our Anaesthetics Team, who retained their Royal College of Anaesthetists' Anaesthesia Clinical Services Accreditation (ACSA) after a review of their practices. It's a highly regarded status, which shows the team provides the highest quality of care for our patients.

Pilot tackles body clock benefits

A pilot scheme to change people's relationships with their natural body clock has launched at The Walton Centre.

Lighting firm Circada installed the Circadian lighting system into part of Horsley Intensive Therapy Unit (ITU), a first for an NHS Trust. It is hoped that the lighting will benefit patients and staff, and potentially improve patient flow by reducing the time spent in ITU.

The pilot is part of the Trust's innovation agenda, and if the feasibility trial is successful, the lighting could be rolled out more widely across the ITU and other patient areas.

New NED appointment

Irene Afful joined the Board of Directors as a Non-Executive Director at the beginning of 2023. Irene has extensive experience working in a multi-agency capacity, spending 25 years with Merseyside Police, where she was the first black female Detective Inspector.

Irene said: "I have had personal experience of the excellent service provided to family and friends and I'm looking forward to supporting the Trust with continuous improvement in its services to support patients, families, staff and the wider community."

A stronger workforce



(From left) Lisa Phillips, Suzanne Hatchard, Colin Baker, Jane Mullin and John Baker.

We're proud to be a forces-friendly employer, recently achieving both Employer Recognition Scheme - Silver, and Veterans Aware Accreditation. We have also signed up to the 'Step into Health' careers pathway where members of the Armed Forces community can connect to the NHS and provides a dedicated pathway into an NHS career.

Two veterans who work at The Walton Centre explained why this work is so important:

Carl Smith, Ward Manager, Lipton Ward, said: "I joined the Royal Corp of Signals at 16, and did tours of Germany, the Falklands and the Gulf. I did 14 years' service during which time I laughed, cried, suffered and endured but I would do it all again.

"Supporting veterans and their next-of-kin in the NHS allows them to develop new skills which they might not have been able to achieve whilst serving. Transition can be difficult but if we as a workforce are educated to help veterans, then it could make their life a lot easier and provide a reliant, strong workforce team."

"To have someone who can help and guide them through the next part of their lives is a huge support"

Lisa Phillips, Vocational Learning Coordinator and Operational Apprenticeship Lead, said: "I joined the Army at 17, in the Adjutant General's Corps, after four years in the Cadets. I loved it; being in the armed forces never leaves you, it's a part of you, a real community.

"Part of my work at The Walton Centre is work experience and pre-employment opportunities and it's an honour to help the armed forces community to change careers either when they've left the military, or if their partner has relocated.

"To have someone who can help and guide them through the next part of their lives is a huge support, and one I'm proud to be part of."

Supporting our patients



SMART (from left) Nicola Roylance, Laura Harkin, Rachel Davis, Hayley Williams and Elenna Talbot

Earlier this year, SMART (Surgical and Medical Acute Response Team) launched their new patient safety initiative 'Call 4 Concern'.

Call 4 Concern is designed to enable patients, families and carers to call for immediate help and advice from SMART, if they are concerned that a change in their or their loved one's condition has not been recognised and the patient is deteriorating.

Elie Talbot, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, SMART, said: "The safety of our patients is our highest priority at The Walton Centre. SMART provide a 24-hour service to support our most vulnerable patients, as well as providing support and care to deteriorating patients.

"We are aware that family and friends know their loved one best and evidence shows that they may identify notable changes in patients earlier than noted by the clinical team.

"Early recognition results in better patient outcomes and as the patient, family, friends, or carers may recognise these early signs and we need their help to ensure early intervention is taken as soon as possible."

This Patient and Family Centred Care approach will help us to improve all dimensions of quality, including clinical effectiveness, and improve the experience of our patients and families in relation to the care and treatment they receive in our hospital.

Help to run our amazing hospital

We will be looking for new Governors this summer to represent the views of and engage with the Trust's members and the wider community. Being a Governor means working together, playing a part in the running of The Walton Centre – the only Trust in the UK dedicated to neuroscience. The Council of Governors has a number of formal duties, they hold the Non-Executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board of Directors and appoint Non-Executive Directors.

You can stand for election to the Council of Governors if you are a member of our Foundation Trust and are at least 16 years old. You can become a Trust Member by simply filling in a form on our website or by calling the Membership Office on 0151 556 3484. For more details about the elections, please check the Governors page on our website.

**Comment,
like &
share!**

"We would like to thank @WaltonCentre and @CCCNHS for being so amazing with us during Kieran's surgeries and treatment. The 2am coffees and toast made a difference and for also letting me and his mum sleepover on Christmas Eve and Day, it's the little things"
Abbie from Twitter



"I have to say that when my husband was there in 2020 he was cared for so so well. Angie was also amazing back then. After his stay for several weeks he went to CRU where again his care was second to none. Thank you so much!"
Kaley from Instagram



"Your staff are truly angels from the cleaners and tea ladies, the lovely ladies who bring us our meals and then the nursing staff who always have a smile and look after us in sometimes such worrying times"
Jan from Facebook





Dr Anita Krishnan and Jennifer Duffy

The right treatment at the right time

Since February 2021, Divisional Clinical Director for Neurology, Dr Anita Krishnan and her team have been implementing the Rapid Access to Neurology Assessment (RANA) service, which provides appropriate patients visiting Emergency Departments in Cheshire, Merseyside and North Wales, rapid access to expert neurologists in clinics at The Walton Centre.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, The Walton Centre was tasked with coming up with a solution on how best to support neurology patients reporting to A&E. Since its inception, RANA has seen 473 patients, saving approximately the same number of bed days in around 30 neighbouring Trusts.

“Our ambition is to build on what we have and maximise the number of patients that are supported via this pathway”

Dr Krishnan said: “A significant proportion of acute inpatient referral requests from our partner hospitals can be common neurological disorders ranging from new onset headaches and seizures to functional disorders and sensory disturbance.

“Before RANA, many of these patients with new neurological signs or symptoms, would often be admitted to the hospital they reported to and wait for a visiting neurologist, who would assess them and, in most cases, agree next steps and discharge them.

“Under RANA, patients who fit the pathway criteria are referred immediately to The Walton Centre. Here they receive the appropriate assessment, diagnosis and care in the RANA clinic - from the most appropriate person, in the appropriate time frame, without getting stuck in the wider healthcare system unnecessarily. When here, patients can expect efficient diagnosis and management of their condition and subsequent treatment if required.

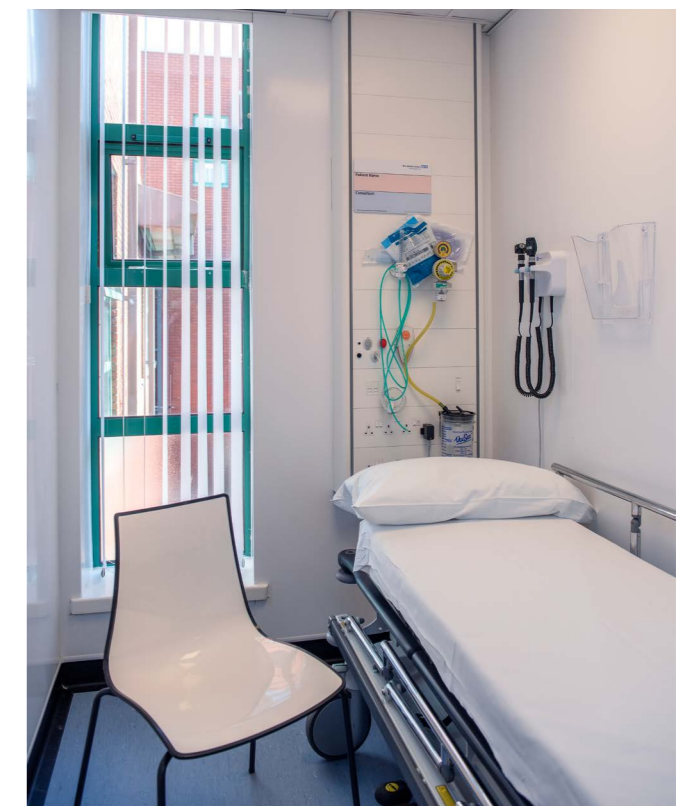
“Over the last two years, we’ve been able to see a range of patients who may have otherwise waited in hospital beds before getting a neurological opinion. It’s been a real team effort from both clinical and non-clinical staff to ensure the system works well and I’m proud of what we have achieved so far. The feedback from the neighbouring Trusts has also been very positive.”

Divisional Director of Operations for Neurology, Jennifer Duffy, said: “Following commitment from our Executive Team and our wider system colleagues, we now have a purpose built, dedicated space for RANA patients. Our ambition is to build on what we have, maximise the number of patients that are supported via this pathway and deliver outstanding care to those patients who need it.

“Feedback from patients so far has been really positive. We’re hearing that the speed of referrals is helping them to get answers quickly, and that they can benefit from the expert neurological service The Walton Centre provides.”

The RANA clinic complements the Walton Way values and the Trust’s overall strategy, which aims to deliver excellent clinical outcomes, patient experience and create collaborative pathways with other acute care trusts in the region.

In this way, the patient stays at the heart of this process. The consultants in charge of the clinic also demonstrate good neurological practice for trainee doctors and nurses, which enhances their education and training.



A bay in the RANA clinic.

A place for everyone

Nationalities from across the world are represented within the NHS and The Walton Centre is no different – we have staff from almost 40 countries working at our Trust, from Great Britain to Greece and Sri Lanka to Sweden.

Mike Gibney, Chief People Officer, said: “We’ve got an incredible sense of community at The Walton Centre, with such international diversity combined with a huge proportion of staff from our local community. So many teams have a real blend of cultures, languages and experience and it all contributes to providing a positive experience for both staff, and our patients.”



Transforming patient rehabilitation

In April 2022, James Gilbert from Warrington was struggling down his own garden path to get his neighbour's attention, so they could call him an ambulance. He had suffered a massive bleed on the brain.

James was transferred to The Walton Centre for lifesaving surgery and treatment. After spending weeks in intensive care, James woke up and found that he could only blink and use his big toe to communicate.

He said: "For two months I was unable to communicate much at all, but Annie Newcomen, one of the Speech and Language Therapists (SLT), assessed me and found I could do basic communication [using a switch and an alphabet chart]. After working with the amazing SLT, I was able to tell my wife I love her. It was a very emotional time."

Working further with Annie on his rehabilitation journey, James was able to communicate more and more using specialist methods, and finally have visitors.

During a large part of James' rehabilitation, he had a tracheostomy (a tube inserted into the windpipe to help him breathe), which unsettled his young children and was difficult to explain.

James said: "The kids would come and visit and be upset about all the different tubes and things I had attached to my body. The tracheostomy in my neck was particularly distressing for them and I couldn't tell them properly that I was ok and it was actually helping. My Speech and Language Therapists saw this and

leapt into action!" Speech and Language Therapist Charlotte Lawrence and Therapy Assistant Emma Cottier saw there was a way to support James and his young family – using a teddy bear.

"For two months I was unable to communicate much at all"

Charlotte said: "The team had been discussing ways that we could facilitate James' children coming into the hospital, to support his rehabilitation and make it a less scary experience for them.

"Emma's daughter very generously donated one of her teddy bears to the ward. We gave the teddy bear a tracheostomy, similar to that of James'.

"We also provided James' wife Claire with some information

resources put together by our Rehab Network Parenting Group, so she could sit down and work through these with their children at home."

James said: "Tracheostomy Ted was a gamechanger. My daughters were less anxious about it because they'd played with the teddy and talked about it with my wife.

"It meant that we could have proper visits and I could enjoy their company without having to answer loads of questions about it. I was finally able to get some hugs!"

"The team at The Walton Centre are amazing. They could see we were struggling as a family and exceeded expectations by creating Tracheostomy Ted and the resources. I honestly think it helped with my rehabilitation too, because it was one less thing to worry about. I can't thank them enough."



James Gilbert during his stay on Lipton Ward

Q&A with Karen Satina



Karen Satina with the GE Signa MRI scanner

What does your role involve?

I work in Radiology, including X-ray, CT and MR, co-ordinating patients coming down from wards and allocating equipment for Theatres. This is to make sure that patients get their X-rays done after surgery or any X-rays or scans that will need reviewing urgently to aid with their treatment are done. Equipment allocation in Theatres is also important because some particular equipment is only used for certain procedures and I have to make sure the department runs smoothly for the benefits of our patients.

What kind of patients do you see and how do you support them?

I support patients with disabilities as well as patients

who have long-term conditions, such as paraplegic patients. I do my best to support them to make them feel comfortable during their X-ray or scan.

I offer them any aid or assistance that makes it easier for them to transfer to the scan table or maybe offer to help them if they need a hand changing into a hospital gown.

What's it like working at The Walton Centre?

I really like working at The Walton Centre especially working in Radiology who I can call family; they are always there to give me support and make me feel I am supported and appreciated. It is by far the best department I have ever worked in.

What are some of the challenges you face in your role?

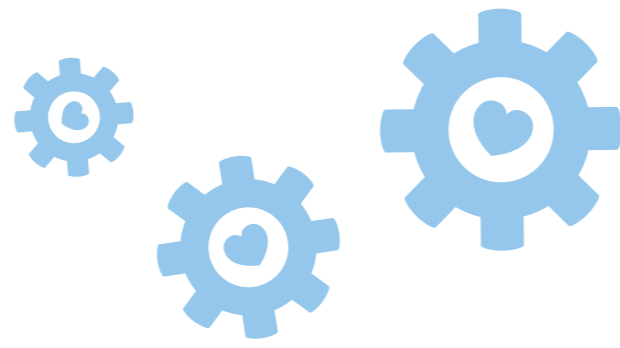
Some patients who require scans and imaging have additional needs and we endeavour to facilitate them in the best way possible. When patients come into the department, we make sure that whoever they need with them is in the room, so they can be comfortable.

This way we can ensure that the best scans are taken to help them in their diagnosis or treatment. It can be a really rewarding moment when we've been able to support patients in this way.

What's the most satisfying part of your job?

When you have patients and colleagues recognising your work. I'm incredibly proud of the service I help to provide and when other staff see this it's very rewarding. To me, this simply means that I have given them the service that they expect.

"When patients come into the department, we make sure that whoever they need with them is in the room, so they can be comfortable."



Pets for patients

Patients on our Complex Rehabilitation Unit (CRU) had some unusual visitors recently, as we were able to restart our animal assisted therapy sessions.

Generously funded by donations to The Walton Centre Charity, patients will be able to take part in sessions every two weeks with all kinds of animals, from rabbits to hedgehogs, for patients to interact with.

Laura Parker, Ward Manager for CRU said: "We identify goals for patients, such as starting conversations about the animals to improve their speech or stroke an animal with a weaker hand to strengthen it, which contributes towards their rehabilitation."

"Thanks to the support of The Walton Centre Charity and Home Safari, these visits are making a huge difference."



Animal therapist, therapy dog and CRU patient

Philharmonic project



Liverpool Philharmonic string quartet performing at The Walton Centre

Patients, staff and visitors have been treated to the sounds of the Liverpool Philharmonic at the hospital recently as their musicians have visited the Trust through their Music in Health Programme. The main aim of the programme is to use music to improve mood and wellbeing and connecting with people through music.

Musicians from the Philharmonic will be visiting both patient and staff areas. They will be working with patients on a one to one basis as well as playing on the wards for all patients and staff to hear. They will also be performing in staff areas as part of the 'Pockets of Joy' programme and pop-up performances to introduce music into a space.

Our fantastic fundraisers

A legacy to be proud of



Canan and Steve with their donation cheque

Local artist Steve Randall has raised an incredible £20,000 for The Walton Centre Charity through donations and proceeds from his artwork. 53-year-old Steve, whose wife Canan is being cared for at The Walton Centre with a slow growing brain tumour, decided to support The Walton Centre Charity

in 2018 when he became aware the charity existed. He left his role as a Financial Director to pursue art shortly after Canan's first surgery in 2014.

He said: "Canan was very clear – paint and raise money for good causes, and that's what I've been doing ever since! I've always enjoyed the process of painting and creating works of art; I'm self-taught and never imagined this life for ourselves. Canan knew that this is where I could flourish and also support the work The Walton Centre does.

"I wanted to create a legacy Canan could be proud of and appreciate in her lifetime. After all this was all her idea! I'm glad that I can contribute to the amazing work the hospital does in looking after Canan and all the other patients they see."

"I owe them my life"

Six years ago, Clare Wilson experienced a serious bleed on the brain. She was rushed to The Walton Centre for lifesaving surgery. Ahead of further surgery, Clare wanted to take on a monumental challenge to raise money for The Walton Centre Charity.

She said: "Honestly, I owe them my life, I couldn't have paid for a better service. Every time I've had to come in for surgery the hospital has been exemplary in their care for me. To thank them properly I just had to do something to raise some money for The Walton Centre Charity."

An avid runner, Clare decided to set the challenge of doing the equivalent of a triathlon every day for 30 days – with help from her colleagues at Co-Op. Collectively, Clare and her

team ran 5km, swam half a mile and cycled 20km each day for the month of November 2022.

Clare continued: "I couldn't believe the outpouring of support I received. It really inspired friends, family and complete strangers to donate to our cause. Altogether we raised over £25,000 for The Walton Centre Charity and I couldn't be happier."



Clare Wilson with her medals

Coming up

Jan Fairclough Ladies Lunch
9 June

Enjoy an afternoon with live music, inspirational talks, an online auction, an exclusive shopping experience and more

Abseil
29 July

'Enjoy' the thrill of abseiling 150ft off one of the iconic Liverpool Cathedrals to raise money for The Walton Centre Charity

Hike Snowdon
30 September

Challenge yourself by climbing the highest mountain in Wales whilst raising money for an amazing cause

Jan Fairclough Ball
24 November

Our annual gala dinner at the Titanic Hotel – a wonderful evening for supporters, hosted by the Fairclough family



**Join our charity lottery for just £5 per month, for
your chance to win up to £10,000!**



**For more information and to sign up online visit:
yourlottery.org/waltoncentre**

