

NEURO MATTERS

WINTER 21/22



The Walton Centre
NHS Foundation Trust

Excellence in Neuroscience



Teacher training -
**LEARNING THROUGH
SIMULATION**

Winning ways
Our Staff Awards
recipients honoured

Healing hands
The impact of
rehabilitation

“We work with a positive and proactive multidisciplinary team to deliver critical treatments to patients at their most anxious and vulnerable time.”

Hibaq Abdi, Interventional Scrub Practitioner, The Walton Centre.



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Neuromatters is written and designed by the Communications and Marketing Team at The Walton Centre, and printed by Zenith Print Group.

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Welcome to the winter 2021 issue of Neuromatters, the magazine of The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust. It's been a busy few months, as we've been getting ready for the colder weather and the pressures that come with it.

Again, COVID-19 is adding an extra layer of complexity to the planning, but I'm so proud of our staff who are taking it in their stride and continuing to provide excellent care to patients.

In this issue of Neuromatters, we look at the fantastic work of our new simulation room (page 8), which is immersing students and staff alike in lifesaving training. You can also find out more about our staff awards (page 6) and the fantastic winners who have gone above and beyond in the last 12 months.

We have recently introduced an enhanced stroke service (page 5) which will mean an innovative treatment will be available to patients around the clock. There's also the Organ Donation Passport (page 10), which is giving donor families that important human connection in an incredibly stressful and sad time when patients become organ donors.

There's more news and features from around the Trust and Charity inside, I hope you enjoy reading this issue!

Jan Ross

Chief Executive

The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust

BRAIN TUMOUR CAUSED BY A RARE GENETIC CONDITION



Ronan's family and friends starting their charity walk outside the Fundraising Office

When Andy Ronan, 40 from Liverpool, began to feel unwell after Christmas 2020 he was diagnosed with a rare genetic disorder called Neurofibromatosis Type 2 (NF2). NF2 is a condition that causes benign tumours to grow on nerves, particularly the ones near the brain connected with balance and mobility.

Andy was immediately referred to The Walton Centre for specialist treatment. He said: "My surgeon, Miss Gilkes, and her team were incredible. The surgery lasted 15 hours. They found two tumours in my brain but managed to remove the biggest one. Even though I lose my hearing in my right ear, I felt so much better. It was later that day they told me about the tumours on my spine and shortly afterwards they told me I had NF2."

With NF2, there is a 50/50 chance the faulty gene can be passed on to children. In Andy's case, the gene has been passed on to his three children. His wife Lisa said: "We were all devastated by the news. But the care Andy, and now my son who's just turned 18, are receiving from The Walton Centre reassures me that they're in safe hands. I felt a bit at a loss for what to do – they are all now affected by this condition and there is nothing I can do. So starting a fundraising campaign for this amazing hospital was my way of doing something!"

The family has raised over £5,000 with a 15-mile charity walk, which you can read more about on their fundraising page: thewaltoncentrecharity.org/our-familys-nf2-journey-

24/7 thrombectomy service



An enhanced stroke service which will deliver lifesaving treatment 24 hours a day, seven days a week has been implemented. The Walton Centre will provide a full thrombectomy service around the clock, dramatically changing the lives of stroke patients across Cheshire and Merseyside.

Thrombectomy is a procedure which involves inserting a catheter into an artery, often in the groin, so that a device can be used to remove a blood clot from a large artery in the brain. The Walton Centre is one of only 24 centres in England that currently provide this service. Previously, the Trust offered the procedure 8am-8pm on weekdays and 9am-5pm on weekends, but this service expansion means that The Walton Centre is now one of a small number of UK centres able to deliver it 24/7, and the first in the north west for stroke patients.

Deputy CEO and Medical Director Dr Andrew Nicolson said: "Being able to offer this specialist procedure 24/7 means a significant improvement to treatment for stroke patients in the region. This procedure is most effective for those who have an ischaemic stroke when the treatment is started as soon as possible after the initial symptoms. Working with our hospital partners across Cheshire and Merseyside has been essential to the successful implementation of this new service, and we hope it will significantly change the outlook for hundreds of stroke patients in our communities."

The Walton Centre launched its new website in September.

The new platform enables visitors to the site to find information on a wide range of conditions and services quickly and easily. Each page is linked to the relevant services and consultants. All patient leaflets have been digitised and are now fully accessible via the website. For all the latest news, features and information about The Walton Centre, check out thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk



Over the summer over 20 nurses arrived from East Asia and India to work at The Walton Centre.

In the weeks since they arrived, they have been training and gaining qualifications to ensure they are fully prepared to care for our patients to a high standard. The recruitment is part of a regional incentive to encourage international nurses to come and work in the north west.

The Neuroscience Research Centre is the first in the world to run a trial into the safety of Tolebrutinib in adults with generalised Myasthenia Gravis (MG).

The trial, called URSA, is a phase 3 randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled, parallel-group study. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the efficacy and safety of a 60mg daily dose compared with a placebo in adult participants with the condition. It works in the brain where it blocks a molecule present in immune cells related to MG.

STAFF HONoured FOR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION

After a virtual event in 2020, The Walton Centre held a small Staff Awards event in person for 2021, honouring the fantastic work of our staff over the past year.

Over 150 nominations were submitted, recognising staff from all across the organisation. One of the most popular categories was the Patients' Choice award, where patients and their family and friends could nominate a member of staff. Thank you for putting forward so many examples of exceptional care and support you have received at The Walton Centre.

After a rigorous judging process, 10 winners were selected; you can see in the full list below. Acting Chairman of The Walton Centre Seth Crofts said: "The judges found it incredibly difficult choosing winners in all of the categories, but all those nominated are winners in our eyes. Some were recognised for their unwavering support for colleagues and patients during the pandemic, others showed thought and an incredible level of kindness and understanding."

Chief Executive Jan Ross said: "It's been an extraordinary few years for staff, so to be able to highlight them in this way is amazing. I want to thank every single member of staff for their hard work and dedication to our patients and each other. Without that high level of support and care, the hospital would have struggled to deliver the outstanding level of service that it does day in day out. Thank you!"



STAFF AWARD WINNERS

Above and Beyond Clinical

Jacqui Isaac

Above and Beyond Non-Clinical

Jennifer Makin

Best Contribution to Learning

Dr Ahmad Ali

Research and Innovation

Dr Ged Smith

Team of the Year

Horsley ITU

Patients' Choice

Carl Bradley

Improving Patient and Family Experience

Lisa Judge

Employee of the Year

Clare Moore and Sarah Griffiths

Good Catch of the Year

Terri Park

Lifetime Achievement

Pat Crofton

EXCELLENCE STATUS

The Walton Centre, alongside the Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust and the North Wales Cancer Treatment Centre, has been awarded Centre of Excellence status after rigorous assessments led by the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission (TJBCM).



Consultant Neurosurgeon Professor Michael Jenkinson who led the application, said: "We are delighted to have been recognised as a TJBCM centre of excellence. The entire team works extremely hard to deliver the best possible wrap-around care for all the 500 brain tumour patients and their families treated at The Walton Centre each year. We are dedicated to providing high-quality, compassionate and holistic care as well as offering clinical trials and research opportunities to patients - without whom, new and better treatments would not be possible."

Led by a committee of experts and virtual site visits, the assessments were backed up by patient feedback about the care they received. The assessors were impressed by how closely the three members of the Liverpool Network work together to make sure people with brain cancer receive seamless care. The report describes that the team "demonstrated excellence and leadership along the treatment pathway".

Prof Kate Bushby, who led the assessment said: "Throughout 2021, we have witnessed first-hand how centres have been increasingly sharing information and are innovating how they provide patient care. I look forward to seeing this upward trajectory continue over the next few years and see how patients and their family will have access to ever improving care."

NEW GOVERNORS

Governor elections took place by post and online last summer, resulting in the re-election of four Governors and nine new Governors taking on roles.

Lead Governor Barbara Strong said: "After a successful election it's great to see Governors old and new working to support The Walton Centre. I'd like to thank all the departing Governors for their considerable contributions to the Trust, in particular former Lead Governor Colin Cheeseman for his nine years of service on the Council of Governors. I'm now looking forward to working with the new Governors to continue to help deliver an excellent service to patients."

The Trust website has a dedicated page where you can see your Governors and find out a little about them:

thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk/about-us/meet-the-governors.htm

You can also contact your Governors by email:
governors@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk

In numbers -
NHS Adult
Inpatient Survey

8/10

The Trust scored 'much better than expected/ better than expected' in 8 out of 10 key areas - our best scores to date.



683

Walton Centre patients completed the survey



in our region for three of the questions

9/10

For overall experience!

ENHANCING CRITICAL CARE SKILLS

Earlier this year, the hospital's Medical Education Centre opened a brand new Simulation Room (Sim Room) dedicated to training clinical staff in emergency neurological care. The previous Sim Room was located in a busy Intensive Therapy Unit (ITU).

"We needed to make way for important scanning equipment, so we saw our chance to consolidate our educational offering, so that clinical training and evaluation could be conducted away from actual staff and patients," said Clinical Lead for Education and Development Oliver Tierney. "Now we have a much bigger, purpose-built Sim Room."

The new space also has state-of-the-art technology, which allows the team to run simulations in real time, separated by one-way glass, so students can benefit from a more immersive training experience.

Oliver continued, "We can now also do immediate debriefs, as we have introduced live camera feeds which can be streamed to nearby seminar rooms. It sounds really futuristic, but this is a fantastic way to educate and show students best practice in emergency situations. We're planning to increase our offering of this kind of training to staff and students from The Walton Centre and neighbouring hospitals and educational organisations. We're finding simulation training like this to be invaluable - we can pause and teach in a safe space where people can learn and, importantly, make mistakes and learn from those mistakes."

"I have learned some valuable skills and the training has improved my confidence levels. I think this is a good training session for students from all levels."



Oliver Tierney, C
Education & Dev



Oliver dem
techniques



Clinical Lead For Development



Demonstrates resuscitation to nursing students



Category	Task	Points
Patient	Check vital signs	4 Points
	Take pulse in radial, carotid, apical, or pedal	2 Points
	Take pulse in both feet applied to femoral	2 Points
Airway	Open airway	1 Point
	Clear	2 Points
	Cardinal manoeuvres for airway obstruction	4 Points
Vital Signs	Appropriate technique, words, discipline	3 Points
	Appropriate technique, words, discipline	2 Points
	Appropriate technique, words, discipline	1 Point
	Check comments for accuracy	4 Points
Respiratory	Appropriate technique, words, discipline	2 Points
	Appropriate technique, words, discipline	2 Points
	Appropriate technique, words, discipline	1 Point
	Check comments for accuracy	4 Points
Other	Appropriate technique, words, discipline	2 Points
	Appropriate technique, words, discipline	2 Points
	Appropriate technique, words, discipline	1 Point
	Check comments for accuracy	4 Points

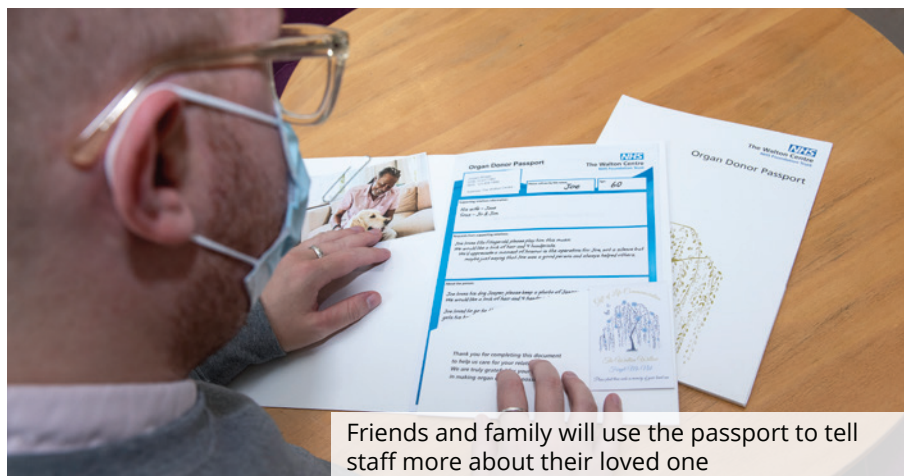
Student nurses practice their skills on a dummy that mimics human responses for an immersive simulation

GIVING THE GIFT OF LIFE

In 2020 the Intensive Care Unit and Organ Donation Team at The Walton Centre developed and implemented the Organ Donation Passport. It's a document which gives relatives and loved ones of a patient who is about to donate their organs the chance to tell staff involved more about who they are as a person. The passport can include photos of the patient, and can include elements like music requests and a description of who they were prior to becoming an organ donor. This important information helps the staff caring for the patient and their family in a personalised and special way.

So far, 22 families have used a passport before their loved one has donated organs at The Walton Centre. The document has become standard practice here and is so far the only Trust in the UK that is using this kind of passport.

Specialist Nurse for Organ Donation Adam Barley said: "For a long time we have wanted to do something to enhance the process, as historical feedback has told us that it can feel quite clinical at an emotional and, sometimes tense, time. I'm really pleased that the passport is beginning to personalise the process, and it really helps staff



Friends and family will use the passport to tell staff more about their loved one

who are involved too. All too often the essence of a person can be lost when a complex clinical pathway is being followed. Families and staff are telling us that this new practice is working well, which is great to hear."

A new idea



Former ITU Sister Catherine Ellis (left) came up with the idea of the Organ Donation Passport, she said: "I noticed that friends and relatives of organ donors were making requests for how they wanted their loved one to be treated

while they were donating. To make sure nothing was lost I thought of creating this document. Also staff from Theatres that helped on ITU during the 2020 pandemic said they would like to know more about the patients that they care for during their donation surgery. Organ donors are people at the end of the day, and to be able to honour them and their incredible last act in this way is amazing. It's become an incredibly important part of the process and one staff have warmed to immediately."

Catherine Ellis has now joined the Organ Donation Team in the North West and will continue support The Walton Centre in the care of organ donors.



Organ Donor Jennie Dowd on her wedding day in 2019

A family perspective

Jennie Dowd sustained a fatal head injury when she was knocked off her bicycle by a car in 2020. Jennie became the first patient to use the Organ Donation Passport. Her wife Sam Brighton and Jennie's family filled out the passport together.

Sam said: "Organ donation is a hard, yet vitally important, last part of someone's life. During her life, if there was something Jennie could do to help others, she would do it. So it was only natural that her last act of selflessness was to become an organ donor.

"The staff looking after Jennie at The Walton Centre were incredible. They made it possible for Jennie's parents and I to have the space to think about what we wanted to include in the passport. The process of Jennie actually donating was very clinical, for obvious reasons, so to be able to share Jennie's personality with those staff involved in this stage of her life was invaluable. I was actually very surprised we were the first family to use the passport and that

it's not common practise in other organ donation centres.

"Using it allowed us to share the fantastic person Jennie was with those staff who cared for her in her final moments. Being able to tell them that Jennie would want her headband left on, and to listen to classical music, and to share a photo of her meant a great deal. She was a brave and enthusiastic woman, she accepted everyone just as they were and did everything she could to uplift those around her. To be able to explain that to the staff involved in her care and donation was important to us."

"Using the passport allowed us to share who Jennie was as a person with those caring for her"

Sam Brighton

Organ Donation at The Walton Centre



The Walton Centre was one of the top 20 centres for organ donation last year (2020)

22

The Organ Donation Passport was introduced in October 2020 and has as so far been used by 22 families



On 20 May 2020, the law around organ donation in England was changed, so people automatically agree to donate organs unless they opt out

A NETWORK OF SUPPORT



“The news that I wouldn’t regain mobility in my arm came as a big shock. But I knew I had to work hard on the rehabilitation and use therapy to get back on track.”

Sara Daniels, patient

with me. But I struggled to even comprehend what to do and how to put the pieces together.”

By this point, Sara had moved into her second stage of rehabilitation, in the Seddon Suite at St Helen’s Hospital. Sara said: “I experienced absolutely fantastic support and worked hard with the Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists to get back on my feet again. They were so attentive, just like the rest of the staff who have looked after me across the network.”

In February 2020 Sara was able to go home and continue to recover in the community.

CMRN Manager Julie Peacock said: “The focus of the network is to enable people to live as independently as possible by maximising their clinical outcomes.

“It’s brilliant to hear Sara’s experience and be able to share it with staff across the network. Each patient comes with a unique set of challenges and it’s good to know that many patients are getting the right support and treatment at the right time.”

The Cheshire and Merseyside Rehabilitation Network (CMRN) is a collaborative partnership between the region’s specialist rehabilitation inpatient units, outpatients and community services, hosted by The Walton Centre.

Patients are individually assessed and a rehabilitation programme is developed according to their specific needs. Over 250 patients are seen across the network every year.

Patients like Sara Daniels, from Seaforth who, in August 2019, had a massive stroke which resulted in left-side hemiplegia (where she experienced paralysis on the left-side of her body) and severe cognitive and emotional problems.

In October 2019, Sara was moved to the Complex Rehabilitation Unit (CRU) at The Walton Centre to begin stage one of her rehabilitation journey.

Sara said: “The news from the physiotherapist that I wouldn’t regain mobility in my arm came as a big shock and I was upset for days afterwards. But I knew I had to work hard on the rehabilitation and use therapy to get back on track.”

The 49 year old was able to go home for Christmas. Sara said: “It was at this moment that I really understood the extent of the damage the stroke had caused. My cognitive abilities were really limited. It hit home when my then four-year-old daughter wanted to play and do a jigsaw puzzle

Q&A

LAUREN FINCH, PHYSIOTHERAPIST



Can you give some background on your experience?

I have a BSc in physiotherapy and have spent most of my career gaining experience across a range of areas, more recently in respiratory care and neuro-rehabilitation.

What does your role entail?

Currently I am on secondment in ITU. My role involves working with a fabulous team of physiotherapists and a wider multidisciplinary team to assess and treat patients with complex respiratory needs and neurological problems. This includes chest clearance, ventilator

weaning, tracheostomy weaning and hyper-acute rehabilitation.

How has your work changed during the COVID-19 pandemic?

I think we worked well within the Therapy Department to support each other and share workload where possible. Our Respiratory Team Leads were fantastic in upskilling us so that we felt confident in treating COVID-19 patients, and made sure that we were always safe in appropriate PPE. We treated patients from other hospitals with a wide variety of conditions that we wouldn't ordinarily see here. Many patients

were admitted to the Complex Rehabilitation Unit with COVID-19 related illnesses, which required collaborating with other trusts to make sure they got access to the right follow-up services.

On a personal level, I felt a strong need to provide emotional and psychological support to patients as they dealt with tragic events without their family by their side. We also tried wherever possible to use technology as a way to include families in treatment sessions.

What's the most satisfying part of your role? And the most difficult?

As respiratory physiotherapists we work closely with patients who have tracheostomies. We are part of a daily ward round with our speech and language therapy and SMART colleagues, where we review all patients with tracheostomies and aim to progress them towards coping without it. As part of this process, patients who are able to talk can start to use their voice again which is really rewarding; especially when families can hear their loved ones' speak to them after a long period of illness.

One of the most challenging things in this role is having difficult conversations with patients and families about their potential to improve. These are sensitive conversations that have to be had at the right time and require empathy, honesty and compassion.

HOSPITAL TEAM COMPLETE MARATHON EFFORT



Staff and supporters from The Walton Centre have raised over £14,000 for The Walton Centre Charity as part of this year's Virtual Virgin London Marathon.

A Walton Centre team, spearheaded by Chief Executive Jan Ross, completed a bespoke course around the streets of Liverpool, raising over £6,000 for the Home from Home relatives' accommodation at The Walton Centre where relatives can stay after a patient has been admitted for urgent treatment.

Jan Ross, Chief Executive, said, "It was a massive challenge but absolutely worth it, to raise money for this fantastic cause. The Home from Home service ensures the families of our patients can stay in a safe environment, close to their loved ones. I'm very proud to be raising money to support this – it's such a vital service for the hospital."

A number of 'Fresh Leg' supporters, including Medical Director and Deputy Chief Executive Dr Andy Nicolson, and Deputy Medical Director Dr Sacha Niven, joined our runners for a mile or two along the route and spurred them along.

We also had two runners, Simon Thomas and Marie Garnett, who ran their own routes as part of the Virtual London Marathon. Simon sandwiched his 26.2 miles around Widnes in the middle of the Great North Run and the Alton Towers half marathon as part of a triple challenge raising money in memory of his late family friend Spen Webster who received treatment at The Walton Centre for a brain tumour.

Marie ran a marathon after learning to walk again following her diagnosis with a brain tumour in 2015, less than six weeks after giving birth. She spent more than

a month at The Walton Centre and underwent three brain surgeries.

Finally, one of our supporters travelled to London, raising money for The Walton Centre where her youngest brother underwent open brain surgery in late September. Ali Young completed her 10th London Marathon to thank The Walton Centre for all they've done for her brother who was treated for two brain aneurysms and a bleed on the brain.

Thank you to all our runners, what an amazing effort by every single one of you and the money raised will benefit so many of our patients.

If you would like to take part in any of our charity events, contact: hello@thewaltoncentrecharity.org

A DECADE OF FUNDRAISING



The 10th anniversary Jan Fairclough Ball, held in November, raised an amazing £72,000 for The Walton Centre Charity. The money raised will fund a UK first for The Walton Centre - the world's most advanced virtual reality neurosurgery simulator. This will not only train the surgeons of the future but continue the training of experienced surgeons – changing and saving more lives.

Charity Patron David Fairclough hosted the event alongside his daughter Sophie and son, Tom, in memory of his late wife Jan, who died at The Walton Centre in April 2011. He said: “Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to hold

our event in 2020. We couldn't be happier that we were able to come together in 2021 – for the 10th time – to raise money for such a fantastic cause.”

Mr Nicholas Carleton-Bland, Consultant Neurosurgeon and lead in medical education, who attended the event, said the simulator will be game-changing.

“The Neuro VR simulator will enable experienced surgeons at The Walton Centre to develop the very latest techniques, taking their skills even further, and allow trainee surgeons to practice safely, yet in a realistic environment.

“It will allow us to become a national hub for simulation based training in neurosurgery, benefitting patients across the country and changing the future of neurosurgery.

“I can't thank David, Sophie and Tom, and everyone who attended the event and donated to The Walton Centre, for their incredible generosity. It really will make a huge difference.”

CHRISTMAS CHEER

Christmas came to The Walton Centre in 2021 as our Christmas fundraising appeal kicked off on 1 December, raising money for the Neuro VR simulator.

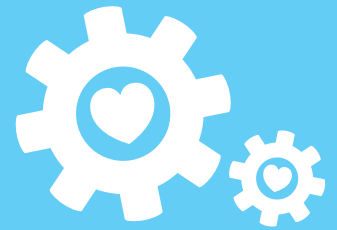
Messages of hope and best wishes from local schoolchildren, patients, former patients and staff were hung on the Christmas tree in our main reception and our Neuropsychiatry Team organised a Christmas choir, treating patients and staff to seasonal carols.

On 10 December, staff across the organisation wore their Christmas jumpers if they were able, making a small donation to the Charity. And,

on Christmas Day itself, presents were distributed to those patients who had to spend the day in hospital, courtesy of The Walton Centre Charity.

Madeleine Fletcher, Head of Fundraising at The Walton Centre Charity, said: “After another difficult year, it's so important to do what we can at Christmas for both patients and staff. Even little things like the messages on the tree and small gifts for those patients who aren't able to spend Christmas with their families at home – they mean so much to everyone and we're delighted to be able to support this.”

How you can support us



Charity Golf Day

Keep your eyes peeled for more information about our golf day at Formby Golf Club – returning for 2022 on 19 May!

Fundraise for US

We have a range of ideas on our website, and tips on how to make the most of your fundraising activity. You can set up a fundraising page on our website and invite your friends and family to get involved and support you.

Make a donation

You can either make a one-off or regular donation via our website. Your donation – however big or small – will make a real difference to patients treated at The Walton Centre now and in the future.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT, TO WIN IT



Join our charity lottery for just £1 per week, for your chance to win a weekly jackpot of £1,000!

For more information and to buy online visit:

thewaltoncentrecharity.org/lottery

Fundraising Team

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**The
Walton Centre
Charity**
*Supporting Excellence
in Neuroscience*