

Neuromatters

Autumn/Winter 2023



In the spotlight
The Walton Centre
hits TV screens

**A night to
celebrate**
Our amazing staff
recognised

The way through
The Pain
Management Team
supporting patients

The Walton Centre is the UK's only specialist hospital trust for neurology and neurosurgery. We're leading the way by delivering meaningful patient outcomes, developing groundbreaking innovations and providing exceptional teaching across neurology, neurosurgery, spinal, pain management and rehabilitation services.

Everybody at The Walton Centre is unified by the same mission: to deliver lifechanging treatment and care that is transformative for people in the community.

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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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'The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust and Charity'.



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

In this issue we feature news about the exciting new eight-part documentary series, Trauma Room One, which was filmed at the hospital this summer and is being broadcast on 5Star and My5. It highlights the amazing work of our teams across the hospital, particularly the surgical teams, and the life-changing procedures carried out every day at The Walton Centre.

We also cover our recent Staff Awards where we celebrated the fabulous work of our staff at an event in central Liverpool. It was a great night and it made me feel incredibly proud to be the Chief Executive.

Our patient story and staff Q&A on pages 10 and 11 mark the 40th anniversary of the Pain Management Team at The Walton Centre. This service has provided an invaluable support to thousands of patients over the years, often in very misunderstood and hidden conditions, and they do a great job.

And as usual, we have some lovely fundraiser stories and news from the Charity. I recently climbed Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon) for the Charity, with over 30 other fundraisers, and it was really inspiring to hear their experiences and why they were raising money for our Charity.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

Jan Ross
Chief Executive
The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust



March with Pride

In July, The Walton Centre took part in Liverpool's annual March with Pride event, which involves organisations from across the region celebrating diversity and inclusion.

LGBTQIA+ Network Lead Sam Fleet said: "It was amazing to see people from all parts of the hospital come together and celebrate Pride! Thank you to everyone who turned out on the day."



New Professorships announced

Huge congratulations to both Mr Andrew Brodbelt and Dr Bernhard Frank for achieving honorary clinical associate professorships from the University of Liverpool.

They cover a range of academic areas, Mr Brodbelt's includes brain tumour epidemiology and Dr Frank's includes pain and neuromodulation.

Spinal robot team hit 50 cases



Neurosurgeon Mr Prokopis Annis and Dr Gautham Balasubramanian. This image has been altered for discretion.

The Walton Centre has surpassed the 50th patient mark - more than any other NHS Trust - using a groundbreaking new surgical robotic navigation system, one of the first of its kind in the UK.

The spinal robot means patients spend less time in the operating theatre and potentially reduce recovery time after major spinal surgery. The system involves a rigid robotic arm, tracked and fully navigated by a camera, which is then programmed to follow a trajectory pre-planned by our surgeons, with a high level of precision.

Mr Nick Carleton-Bland, Consultant Neurosurgeon, said: "I'm delighted we've passed 50 robotic spinal surgery cases at The Walton Centre - the most in the UK - demonstrating great outcomes for patients. The new system helps us improve patient outcomes, and also train the next generation of spinal surgeons."

Celebrating our amazing staff



(From left) Alan Stubbs, Tony Bellew, Jan Ross and Max Steinberg presenting the staff awards

We were proud to celebrate The Walton Centre's exceptional staff at our 2023 Staff Celebration and Awards, which were held in September at the Crowne Plaza in Liverpool.

Jan Ross, Chief Executive, said: "It was wonderful to have almost 400 people in attendance for a great evening. I would like to congratulate the winners on their outstanding contributions and achievements, as well as all those who were nominated for an award."

In her speech at the start of the evening, Jan said: "We had over 250 nominations across nine categories - more than double last year - including over 70 nominations for the Patients' Choice Award from patients and their families and friends - showing the enormous impact and depth of feeling staff have for their colleagues and our patients have for our staff."

"The Board and I can't thank you enough - tonight's event is just a small example of the value we place on our staff, and how important you are to the success of The Walton Centre."

We were delighted to be joined again by Walton Centre supporters, ex-boxer Tony Bellew and ex-footballer Alan Stubbs to present the awards.

Here we recap the winners in each of our nine categories:

Above and Beyond – Clinical
Laura Parker, Ward Manager, Complex Rehabilitation Unit

Above and Beyond – Non-clinical
Steve Holland, Head of Estates

Excellence in Education and Learning, and Research and Innovation
Dr Selina Johnson, Pain Specialist Physiotherapist

Improving patient impact
Dr Kerry Mathews, Clinical Psychologist and PMP Lead

Team of the Year – Clinical
Neurophysiology

Team of the Year - Non-clinical
The Neurosurgery and Neurology Operations Teams

Employee of the Year
Charlotte Lawrence, Speech and Language Therapist, and Abigail Hayes, Lead Occupational Therapist

Patients' Choice Award
Cathy Stoneley, Neurovascular ANP

Chief Executive's lifetime achievement award
Professor Andrew Brodbelt, Consultant Neurosurgeon

A special event remembers special people



Families at The Walton Willow event

This summer, the first in-person Walton Willow Gift of Life event since the pandemic was held at The Walton Centre.

Family and friends of those patients who passed away at the hospital and then become organ donors gathered together to commemorate their loved one's final selfless act.

The Walton Willow sculpture was adorned with new leaves, which have names of their loved-ones engraved and the date they donated.

Clinical Lead for Organ Donation Dr Jennifer Burgess said: "The event was a celebration of the gift that donors have given. Organ donation is definitely something we all need to talk about more, especially your personal wishes around what you want to happen when you pass away.

"Having that conversation with your family could be the difference in saving the lives of those waiting on the transplant waiting list."

"Having that conversation with your family could be the difference in saving the lives of those waiting on the transplant waiting list."

Earlier this year NHS Blood and Transplant released figures which named The Walton Centre as one of the top 20 donor hospitals in the UK.

Specialist Nurse for Organ Donation Catherine Ellis said: "As a team, we work hard with Intensive Care staff and the wider hospital to make sure organ donation is a key consideration.

"We work closely with relatives and friends to carry out their loved one's wishes, putting them at the heart of this often lifechanging process."

Find out more and register your decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register at: www.organdonation.nhs.uk

Innovative video system launched



Nurses Lee-Marie Rennie and Jade Gerrard using the surveillance software

An innovative camera system has been rolled out in the Trust's Hyper Acute Rehabilitation Unit to enhance monitoring of our most vulnerable patients.

The closed-circuit camera system, recently installed in Lipton Ward, will enable clinical staff to monitor up to four patients at a time.

Lipton Ward Manager Jade Gerrard said: "Depending on the number of

complex patients we have on the ward and due to the layout of the ward, each patient may require a dedicated member of staff in order to be cared for safely, which can be considered intrusive for the patients and put pressure on staffing resources."

The system will be used to monitor patients who are vulnerable to falls, confusion, in some cases delirium and those who may have devices in-situ that require close monitoring.

Marking 75 years of the NHS

In July we celebrated 75 years of the NHS. We held a jam-packed day of activities to thank our staff for all of their hard work and celebrate with our patients and visitors, including a free BBQ for staff, volunteers, patients and visitors.

Thanks to our fundraising team for putting the Trust in touch with RRT (Rapid Relief Team), who kindly hosted and donated the supplies for the BBQ. Evening staff didn't miss out, with treat boxes delivered to all areas with overnight staff.

Staff were also treated to a performance from a string quartet from Liverpool's Philharmonic Orchestra, and were joined by ACE, a local choir. ACE have recently fundraised for The Walton Centre Charity and includes patients from our Trust and young people with learning disabilities.

Our fundraising team put together a 75-item mega hamper with a unique selection of gifts that included beauty products, home fragrance and accessories, food and drink, NHS and The Walton Centre Charity merchandise, and much more.

Comment, like & share!

"I had surgery in March. Everyone @WaltonCentre are absolute heroes."
- Danny

"Simply the best. I owe The Walton Centre and all its staff so very much. I can't praise the NHS highly enough. The care our family received has been superb."
- Janine



"The Walton Centre is full of amazing people, bless them all! All nurses and staff in Dott & Caton wards, and also ICU! The amazing doctors that worked on and still help my partner with his aneurysm- Mr Yousaf and team, Lara, Debbie- I wish I knew all the names!"
- Katarzyna

"It's a fantastic hospital, I couldn't choose from my nurses who cared for me as they were all wonderful. Dr Nicolson is a lovely, lovely man, he is my consultant! He is never allowed to retire xx"
- India



"Thank you to the wonderful MRI team wonderful team looking after me this morning in the magic tunnel "
- Rachel





Behind the scenes: The Walton Centre on the small screen

“It’s a great lens for people not familiar with The Walton Centre to see the exceptional work that goes on here every day.”

Over the summer, we granted Channel 5 special access to The Walton Centre to film an exclusive eight-part series showcasing the work of our amazing staff.

Focusing on trauma and urgent patient cases, the series charts some of the most critical moments and life-changing operations our specialist staff carry out.

Each episode reveals the inner workings of some of the hospital’s most complex surgeries and treatments offered to patients.

Medical Director and Deputy Chief Executive Dr Andy Nicolson said: “When we were approached to take part in this new series, we saw it as a great opportunity to show what happens behind the scenes. It’s a great lens for people not familiar with The Walton Centre to see the exceptional work that goes on here every day. The crew captured some incredible patient and staff stories, and I couldn’t be more proud of what’s on show.”

“Trauma Room One” is on 5Star and My5 every Wednesday until mid-December. Find out more on Channel Five’s website or by following our social media channels.

The pathway of medicine

The Walton Centre is a lead organisation in the training of the the neurologists and neurosurgeons of tomorrow, with many junior doctors working at the hospital. But what does being a junior doctor actually mean?

Here we've broken down the different levels of doctor, and what some of our clinicians say about training and working at the Trust.



"As well as being a neurology registrar, completing my specialist training, I spend half my time conducting neuroscience research.

"My research aims to improve the diagnosis and treatment of encephalitis, a devastating condition characterised by inflammation of the brain. I feel very privileged to be able to design and deliver research projects, including clinical trials, as well as looking after the patients who will benefit from our studies.

"I've worked at The Walton Centre for ten years now, and it's a wonderful hospital in which to train and work, with a strong commitment to quality research."

Dr Mark Ellul
Neurology Registrar and Clinical Lecturer

Registrar years

Registrars

Registrars are senior doctors in a hospital, embarking on gaining a deeper knowledge of a chosen specialism. Following the completion of registrar training, doctors will be able to practice as a consultant.

Consultancy

"As a Liverpool native and graduate of University of Liverpool School of Medicine, I feel very fortunate to train here at The Walton Centre. Training posts in neurosurgery are very competitive and this hospital is a popular destination for trainees. You quickly come to feel at home and are valued as an integral part of the team.

"My experience of the training and support provided to build my career has been excellent. Because it is such a busy unit, there is a wealth of training opportunities with access to state-of-the-art facilities and the most advanced neurosurgical techniques.

"Research is a focus here and trainees are also encouraged to develop and pursue academic interests including taking time out to obtain higher degree qualifications. I am fast approaching the end of my training, but I hope to continue my career here in Liverpool!"

Mr Geraint Sunderland
ST7 Neurosurgery



Clinical Fellows and Trust Grade Doctors

A clinical fellow or trust grade doctor are doctors who have completed a minimum of foundation training but chosen not to enter in a training programme. They may have chosen to work in an particular area to gain more experience before pursuing a training programme. Some may opt to continue down this route and gain enough experience to qualify as a consultant.

Core Medical Training

Core Surgical Trainee/Internal Medical Trainee Doctors (CST/IMT)

Following FY1 and FY2, a doctor may enter further training in either a medical or surgical specialty; core surgical training (CST) or internal medical training (IMT) programme. These are two- or three-year programmes, designed to provide more dedicated specialty experience and where doctors will be given increasing responsibility.

Core Surgical Training

"My job usually consists of attending ward rounds, tending to the inpatients, clerking admissions, performing procedures such as lumbar punctures and performing emergency clinics such as RANA and emergency neurology clinics. This is my first job in neurology and The Walton Centre has helped pique my interest in the subject.

"My aim is to apply for IMT and hopefully, go through the pathway to continue with my passion for the subject. The Walton Centre is an extremely supportive environment with plenty of opportunities to learn and improve.

The registrars, SHOs, consultants and other members of The Walton Centre have made working here an enjoyable experience and hopefully, it keeps getting better from here."

Dr Mohammed Wazil
Junior Trust Grade Doctor, Neurology



FY2

Foundation Doctors, Year One & Two (FY1/FY2)

After graduating medical school, all newly qualified doctors undertake a two-year foundation course. During this time, they will gain experience in medical, surgical, and psychiatric specialities as well as general practice. Following this, they may choose to enter into a specialty training programme or apply for 'trust grade' job to gain more experience and explore different specialities.

FY1

Medical School

“It was a game-changer”

All his life, Tony Dunn from Liverpool has experienced chronic pain.

To mark the 40th anniversary of The Walton Centre’s Pain Management Programme, he is sharing his story of taking part in one of their courses and the impact it has had on his life.

“I was born with cerebral palsy, so growing up I was having a lot of gruelling operations and procedures. To that end, I’ve been in varying levels of pain throughout my life.

“The usual suspects are my back and my legs, but a couple of years ago I was getting bad hip pain and it was exacerbating everything else.

“I’m not one for going to the doctor, but I had to with this new level of pain because it was impacting my life considerably.

“They referred me to the Pain Management Programme at The Walton Centre, and before long I was getting assessed and accepted onto a course to help me manage my pain.

“That first day I was in the waiting room, about to be called in for the assessment. I was nervous, pale and sweating thinking about what was about to happen.

“Then a group of patients came through the waiting room, smiling, happy and energetic. These were all people with some sort of chronic pain and they looked so full of life!

“Fast forward to taking part in the course, and it was a gamechanger. Therapy staff would get us in the gym and help us to relearn almost automatic actions like walking up the stairs.

“The expert staff taught me how to centre myself and focus on the moment, rather than worry about what’s coming next. I realised that mental and physical health are interlinked and can work together.”

“I was pulling myself up with my upper body on the banister, when they taught me to lean into it, use my legs. At this point I could already see a way forward with how to manage my chronic pain.

“At first, I worried that the meditation sessions and wellbeing would be a waste of time. But I persevered and really tried hard.

“The expert staff taught me how to centre myself and focus on the moment, rather than worry about what’s coming next. I realised that mental and physical health are interlinked and can work together.

“I did the course last year, and since then I’ve been taking what they taught me and putting it into day-to-day life. I’ve got the best outlook I’ve had in a very long time, and I’m so grateful for the coping tools the Pain Team have given me. Here’s to another 40 years!”



Pain patient Tony Dunn

Q&A with John Tetlow

What does your role involve?

I’m the lead for the pain management occupational therapy team, I oversee the occupational therapy elements of the programme, including managing and supervising staff and developing the service. I have also been involved in national projects, representing occupational therapists working in pain management across the UK, to help write national standards and guidelines. I am lucky in my role to still be involved in facilitating therapy sessions with our patients as this is a really rewarding part of the job.

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

I help support people who have a chronic pain diagnosis. Working as part of a multidisciplinary team, we assess their needs and provide one-to-one or group-based interventions, helping them to learn how to manage pain that cannot be cured.

The occupational therapy sessions include teaching activity management strategies, facilitating and reflecting on target setting and teaching mindfulness and meditation skills. We help people explore routine and structure and a more balanced approach to day-to-day activities. We also run a clinic to support patients with individual work and employment goals.

What’s it like working at The Walton Centre?

I had my first experience of pain management during my time



John Tetlow, Lead Occupational Therapist in Pain Management

working on the neuro inpatient wards in 2003, but was successful in gaining a full-time post as a senior therapist in May 2007.

I then progressed into a team lead role. The length of time I have worked here says a lot about how I feel about The Walton Centre. It’s nice to see so many friendly, caring faces!

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

Living with chronic pain is very challenging for patients and helping them learn how to come to terms with and manage a long-term condition is not easy. We are patient, understanding and knowledgeable.

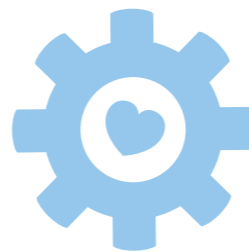
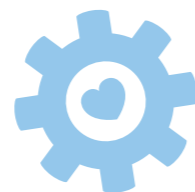
Developing a rapport with our patients is important to form a

trusting therapeutic relationship. This often means that patients will share difficult past experiences.

What’s the most satisfying part of your job?

I have always enjoyed getting to know people and their stories, and being able to help make a positive difference. Working with patients from initial assessment to six-month follow-up shows us how we support meaningful changes people make. We receive many thank you cards from our patients, with heartfelt reflections of how attending the programme has improved their lives.

This gives me great job satisfaction! I also really enjoy working in a multidisciplinary team who respect and care for each other. Some team members I have known for over 21 years!



Supporting our patients

Thanks to the support of our amazing fundraisers, The Walton Centre is the first NHS hospital to install an innovative 'tilt table' for patients needing immediate rehabilitation.

The Erigo tilt table is an adjustable table that has robotic movement capability, designed to mobilise patients with circulatory, neurological, or musculoskeletal conditions.

The new apparatus will be used by patients staying on Lipton Ward, the Hyper Acute Rehabilitation Ward.

James Gilbert and his family were inspired to fundraise for the equipment last year, after recovering on Lipton Ward after a bleed on the brain.

He said: "For two months I was pretty much unable to move out

of bed. But with help from the incredible physiotherapy team they were able to get me back on my feet again. I discovered that The Walton Centre charity had a fund for rehabilitation and that they wanted to purchase new tech for the ward, so I had to get involved.

"The family and I got to work and did a charity walk in the Cheshire countryside and drummed up support on social media, raising £16,000!"

Head of Fundraising at The Walton Centre Charity Madeleine Fletcher said: "Seeing James not only on his feet, but fundraising for the hospital is fantastic, and what he has contributed to will mean cutting-edge therapy for patients right at the beginning of their rehabilitation journey.

"All of the fundraisers who contributed to the campaign to buy

the new equipment are incredible people, and we're so grateful for all of their support.

"A special thank you to all of those who attended last year's Jan Fairclough Ball too, who also raised a large portion of the funds needed to purchase the equipment."



Physiotherapists with a patient using the tilt table

Padding for charity



The Browne family with their donation check

A massive thank you to the Browne family who kayaked the Leeds Liverpool canal to raise money for our charity in memory of their loved one Duncan, raising over £10,000 so far!

10 family members took on the 125 mile challenge in May - just short of a marathon a day - quite an amazing effort!

Our fantastic fundraisers

Sky diving friends



Ella during her skydive

Ella and Max recently completed a sky dive for their friend Georgia, who is living with a neurological condition called NMO (Neuromyelitis Optica).

They raised over £5,500 - an amazing amount that will help to support

An 85-mile fundraising effort

Not only did Physiotherapist Rachel and her friends smash their Parish Walk challenge - 85 miles walking around the Isle of Man, but they raised over £1,500 for The Walton Centre Charity doing it!

Rachel was fundraising for the Home from Home charity appeal. She said: "I have the privilege of working on the Complex Rehabilitation Unit, where we treat patients with life changing illnesses and injuries from all over Cheshire and Merseyside, and as far as the Isle of Man. These patients are often in hospital for many months, without their loved ones being able to visit daily.

"The Home from Home appeal allows relatives of patients who live a distance away to stay in the accommodation, taking away some of the stress

patients at The Walton Centre. They said: "Last year, after lots of long stays in hospitals and countless tests, Georgia was diagnosed with NMO.

"Her life has changed massively as a result of having NMO and she is working hard to adapt to her new life and prepare for how it will be in the future.

"The Walton Centre supports people like Georgia and does an amazing job.

"We really wanted to help The Walton Centre in any way we can and more importantly raise awareness of NMO to help Georgia and others going through the same experience."

that these families are under when supporting their loved ones through their illness.

"This was by far the biggest challenge I ever set myself, but it was amazing, and I was delighted at the amount we were able to raise for the Charity."



Rachel and friends during their charity walk

Ways to fundraise

Sign up to Walk for Walton 2024

We're once again asking our amazing supporters to walk 100,000 steps across the month of May.

Express your interest early by contacting our Fundraising team: wcf.fundraising@nhs.net

Bring a team to the 2024 Golf Day

Join us for a fantastic day of golf at the prestigious Formby Golf Club

For more information, contact Madeleine: madeleine.fletcher3@nhs.net

Sign up to our Charity lottery

Every time you play our Charity lottery you are supporting The Walton Centre Charity who fund a variety of projects at the hospital in providing the best treatment and care possible for its patients and their families.

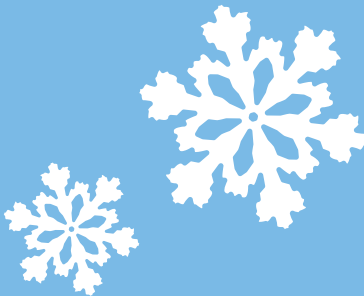
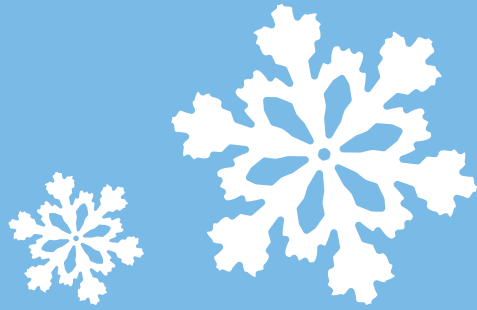
Sign up at: yourlottery.org/waltoncentre/

Gifts in Wills

Leaving a gift in your Will is not only a special way to support the hospital, it also means that you will have a lasting impact on The Walton Centre long in to the future.

For more information visit: www.thewaltoncentrecharity.org/leave-a-gift-in-your-will

Charity Christmas cards



The Walton Centre Charity Christmas cards are on sale from the Fundraising Office in the main reception of The Walton Centre. There are many designs to choose from and cards are sold in packs of 10 at £3.50 per pack.

They are also available to buy online at thewaltoncentrecharity.org

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