

CARE

IN PARTNERSHIP

September 2026

Keeping it natural

Nature recovery
ranger helping
improve the outside
environment at
hospitals in Tameside
and Stockport



Chair's Welcome

Hello, and welcome to the very first edition of CARE in Partnership, the new newsletter from South East Sector Health Care Partnership, featuring news from over the past year from the NHS in both Tameside and Glossop, and Stockport.

The South East Sector Health Care Partnership is a formal collaboration between Stockport NHS Foundation Trust and Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust. The Partnership brings the two organisations together to strengthen local hospital and community services through closer working, shared learning, and improved resilience.

It has certainly been an active, busy and productive year on both our hospital sites and throughout our community services.

The Stockport hospital site has seen an extensive range of building improvements, with a new and improved emergency and urgent care campus, outpatients building, MR scanner building and a new Macmillan Cancer Support Centre and therapy garden supported by our Stockport NHS Charity.

Tameside and Glossop has seen a number of great innovations, with colostrum providing enhanced care for breastfeeding mothers, a new sensory room to support young patients, and a wonderful new way of preserving precious memories for those facing a cancer

diagnosis, all thanks to a groundbreaking new programme supported by our Tameside and Glossop NHS Charity.

At both trusts we've seen great innovations in the fields of both AI and robotics enhancing patient care and treatment, and in a great example of our increasing partnership work, a nature recovery ranger is now busy helping both hospital sites improve their outside environments. This in turn can help with recovery as well as making more pleasant surroundings for patients, visitors and staff.

As well as finding out more on this, you can find discover moving examples of how patients and their families have helped make a real difference in thanks for their care.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Chair
David Wakefield



More support for people facing cancer with new Stockport Macmillan Cancer Support Centre

New support for people affected by cancer across Stockport and the High Peak is now available, with the opening of a new Macmillan Cancer Support Centre on the Stepping Hill Hospital site.

The centre is now providing personalised support, advice and guidance for people affected by cancer. A range of information resources is available, with on-site staff who can help users access local services and organisations.

The centre operates on a drop-in basis, with no appointment necessary. It can be found between the rear Medical and Surgical Building entrance and Outpatients Department C at Stepping Hill Hospital, with further signposting toward the centre on site.

Over time, the service aims to expand beyond the hospital site through community-based activities and partnerships, helping more people access support closer to home.

Designed by Arcadis, the centre has been created to provide a welcoming, calming and supportive environment. Thoughtfully designed to maximise natural light and incorporate elements inspired by nature, the space aims to promote comfort and wellbeing for patients, visitors and staff.

Future plans for the centre will include a programme of events and activities, including coffee mornings, wellbeing sessions and visits from partner organisations such as Citizens Advice.



The centre is run by Joe Wiecha, the Macmillan Cancer Support Centre Manager.

Joe said; "It's been fantastic for the centre to finally open and welcome our very first visitors. Whoever you are, and whatever your experience of cancer, you will always receive a warm welcome at our centre. Whether you're living with cancer, supporting a family member or friend, or adjusting to life beyond treatment, our team is here to listen, support you, and help you access the information, services, and guidance you need."

The centre is open Monday-Friday, 10:00am - 4:00pm, and can be contacted via email at macmillancentre@stockport.nhs.uk, or on the phone at 0161 419 4582.

Building for the future in Stockport

Several separate building projects have transformed the face of the Stockport hospital site over the past eighteen months; all of them enabling us to provide enhanced care for the future.

The first of these was the finalisation of the emergency and urgent care campus build – a major project which took almost three years. The £34m project, delivered by Tilbury Douglas, involved the construction and refurbishment of 3,900m² of emergency care space. Completed in May 2025, the new campus was developed to increase capacity, bring key services together and help patients access the right care more quickly.

The development co-locates an emergency department (A&E) with a Hyper Acute Stroke Unit, Clinical Decision Unit, Medical Same Day Emergency Care unit and mental health assessment areas, alongside a dedicated paediatric emergency area.

By bringing these services together in one modern environment, the campus supports closer collaboration between clinical teams and helps improve the way patients move through urgent and emergency care.

The campus provides a greatly improved environment for both patients and staff, and was shortlisted for a national Construction News award.



Since the completion of the scheme, we've seen improvements in how patients are directed to the most appropriate care. Activity in Medical Same Day Emergency Care has increased, helping more patients access same-day urgent care and reducing pressure on the Emergency Department (A&E).

Average waiting times for Medical Same Day Emergency Care have also improved, with current average waits around three hours and consistently below four hours.

The redesigned ambulance drop-off zone and enhanced hospital frontage have contributed to improved ambulance handover performance, with more than 95% of ambulance handovers completed within 60 minutes for a sustained period following completion.

In addition to the new campus, a new magnetic resonance (MR) scanner suite was opened to provide an enhanced service in July 2025.

The new suite includes two new state-of-the-art MR scanners, benefiting our stroke care,

cancer care, and emergency and urgent care services. Scanners are providing swifter service and helping to reduce waiting times, with patients no longer waiting longer than six weeks for a scan.

MR scans can be used in many ways, including diagnosing neurological conditions, assessing musculoskeletal issues, detecting and staging cancer, examining organs and detecting inflammation.

The scanners include innovative new screen technology, funded by our own Stockport NHS Charity, which beam soothing images to patients as they have their scans, and can help patients feel less claustrophobic whilst in the machines.

The MR service at the hospital has been taken back in-house to Stockport NHS Foundation Trust's own radiology service, having previously been outsourced to Alliance Medical.

Another major project was the completion of our new Outpatients B building, which opened in September 2025, provided by MTX.

The new building is a modern and efficient facility containing over 50 rooms, where patients, their families and carers are now receiving high quality care. Services available from the facility include orthoptics, optometry, dentistry, cardiology, neurology, oncology, pain, podiatry, rheumatology and more.

The project used the latest modern methods of construction, which has been shown to produce less carbon emissions when compared to more traditional building solutions. The modules also meant using lighter weight materials, which in turn contributed to a reduction in transport requirements, in keeping with our Green Plan of improving sustainability.

And finally, in May this year we opened a new Urgent Treatment Centre to further improve the capacity of our emergency services, with five additional treatment rooms to expand our capacity to support minor injuries.

Organ donors who gave the “gift of life” honoured in mural artwork

Four organ donors at Tameside Hospital were honoured at a ceremony as their names were added to special memorial artwork.

The apple blossom tree wall art adorns the entrance corridor in the Trust's Critical Care Unit and its petals display the names of those who have given the gift of life to others through organ and tissue donation.

One donor remembered at the ceremony was 34-year-old Mark Thorley from Tameside, who sadly died in September 2025 after suffering multiple cardiac arrests caused by a seizure.

As a registered organ donor, his family were supported by the organ donation team at Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust to honour his wishes. Following his death, Mark's kidneys, pancreas, heart and lungs were all donated to five strangers in need of a transplant.

Upon placing Mark's petal on the apple blossom memorial tree, Mark's mother, Dawn Letham said "We felt heartbroken, but extremely proud and comforted – knowing Mark had saved five lives."

Mark's family are sharing his story in the hope of supporting other patients and families at Tameside Hospital. His family, friends and colleagues have come together to raise funds for the Critical Care Unit through Tameside & Glossop NHS Charity, including support towards a proposed memorial garden for patients and families.

Charity Manager Emily Whelan said "We are very grateful for all the support shown by Mark's family and friends for the Critical Care Unit after they took such good care of Mark in his final days.

"The money raised will hopefully help create a quiet and peaceful space for future critical

care patients and their families to sit and reflect during tough times, or remember those who are no longer with us."

The family also want to encourage others to have open conversations with their loved ones about organ donation.

"Our message has always been clear from the moment we lost Mark," Dawn Letham said, "One life can be lost, but up to nine lives can be saved because of that one loss.

"The organ donation team really embraced us, literally held our hands, and explained everything at such a difficult time.

"So many people have said to us that they had no idea that families are asked permission, even though they are on the register. Hopefully through Mark's story, we can get that message out, loud and clear.

"Two minutes is all it takes for families to sit together and discuss their wishes, register their wishes, and officially sign up."

Donations to support the Critical Care Unit's memorial garden can be made via JustGiving at www.justgiving.com/page/memorialgarden-mark, or by scanning the QR code.



New sensory room opens at Tameside Hospital to support children and families



A brand new sensory room is now providing a welcoming and inclusive space for young patients at the Tameside Hospital Children's Unit.

The newly refurbished room has been transformed thanks to the generosity of Tameside & Glossop NHS Charity, supporters, local businesses and volunteers.

It replaces the previous sensory room with modern, accessible equipment designed to better meet the needs of children and young people. It offers a calming and interactive environment that can help reduce anxiety, encourage play and provide distractions during treatment or recovery.

The room was officially opened by the Trust's Chief Executive alongside young patient Mila, who helped cut the ribbon, with a surprise appearance from special guest SpongeBob SquarePants, much to the delight of children, families and staff attending the celebration.

Speaking at the opening, Chief Executive Karen James OBE thanked everyone involved in bringing the project to life.

She said: "This project is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when our hospital, charity, partners and community come together with a shared goal, improving the experience of the children and families who use our services.

"Thanks to the generous support of Tameside & Glossop NHS Charity, we have been able to transform the space into a welcoming, inclusive and engaging environment that better meets the needs of our patients today."

Karen paid tribute to the many organisations and individuals who supported the refurbishment, including EQUANS, whose colleagues not only raised funds by completing the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge but also volunteered their time and skills to strip out and redecorate the room. She also thanked Accessibility for its generous £1,000 donation towards the project, alongside everyone who donated, fundraised or contributed in any way.

Back to nature with the recovery ranger



Outside garden areas on both the Stockport and Tameside hospital sites are now receiving new support and improvement with the appointment of a brand specialist nature support role.

Nature recovery ranger Matt Ross is now working two days a week on both sites helping to create more nature friendly green spaces, and supporting staff, patients and visitors to access them to support their physical and mental wellbeing.

He is one of nine rangers based across ten NHS Trusts around the country working as part of the NHS Forest / Healthy by Nature project, spearheaded by The Centre for Sustainable Healthcare (CSH) and funded by the National Lottery. The project is led by CSH's Green Space for Health team who also manage the NHS Forest project, which has planted more than 160,000 trees across hundreds of NHS sites.

The rangers aim to inspire and support healthcare sites to transform their green spaces for health, wellbeing and biodiversity. It's hoped the project will benefit over 86,000 community members across the ten areas by connecting people with nature at NHS sites.

Time in green space has the power to reduce stress and anxiety, and has been proven to benefit many physical and mental health conditions. The initiative also supports the NHS's commitment to tackling climate change and improving biodiversity, as well as demonstrating how healthcare settings can lead the way in preventative and community-based care as outlined in the 10 Year Health Plan for England.

Matt is currently reviewing opportunities to plant more wildflowers and pollinator-friendly plants on the sites, and is looking at where mowing plans could be reviewed to increase biodiversity. He is also working in some courtyard garden spaces, and will be running some nature connection drop-in activities for staff over the summer.

Matt has long experience in the area, having previously spent nine years running and educational and community centre for the Peak District National Park Rangers, and also running his own health walk business.

These initiatives included a social prescription 'woodland wellbeing' group, and running a programme of Nature Prescriptions for Derbyshire.

Matt said;

I've loved nature my whole life, and have been fortunate to spend most of my career connecting people with it. Time and time again, I have seen the health wellbeing benefits that can be unlocked with people spending time in nature, and its great to be bringing that to people in the hospital services in Stockport and Tameside, whether that's patients, visitors or staff.

I'm really looking forward to working with colleagues and making real and lasting improvements soon.

The nature recovery ranger is helping towards the Southern Sector Partnership's Green Plan, which sees both trusts reaching Net Zero in carbon impact by 2038.

Other achievements in this area in the past year have been Stockport's Emergency Department receiving the Bronze 'GreenED' prize from the Royal College of Emergency Medicine to reduce emissions, and Tameside's project to decommission its ageing gas-powered steam heating system and replace it with modern air source heat pumps, which will deliver a 23% reduction in the emissions the trust directly controls.

Robot power supporting Tameside pharmacy and Stockport surgery

The pharmacy at Tameside Hospital recently welcomed a new member of staff called Roary to the team. But Roary isn't just any employee: they work all day and night without needing a rest, and in just seconds they can pick out the right prescription among thousands of medicines. That's because they're a robot.

Roary is the name given to a new automated system designed to store, manage and dispense medicines safely and efficiently. Named for the "roaring" sound it makes when picking out medication, Roary is supporting the pharmacy team to work more efficiently by handling many of the administrative tasks involved in running a busy medicines dispensary.

This frees up time for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to focus on the more complex tasks and those all important face-to-face interactions with patients.

It will also mean patients can get their prescribed medicines more quickly. In the past, the pharmacy team have had to manually scour the dispensary shelves for each prescription. Now, the team can simply input the required medicines into a computer, and the robot will select the packet with the matching barcode and dispense it through a hatch on the other side. It can even group medicine packs according to which ward they are heading to.

Crucially, the robot can dispense medicines directly to clinical staff when the pharmacy is closed, helping get medicines to patients without delay all through the night. On-call out of hours pharmacists can instruct the robot from their laptops at home, cutting out the time they would need to travel back to the hospital.



"Roary is already making a huge difference to our pharmacy team. We're seeing increased efficiency and faster turnaround times, plus better stock control with fewer medicines going to waste." said Stacey Starr, Chief Pharmacy Technician at Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust.

"It also supports workforce wellbeing by taking some of the more repetitive, high-volume tasks off the hands of our skilled pharmacy team. Most of all, the robot is incredibly accurate, and all of this will contribute to improving patient safety."

Robots are making a big difference in Stockport surgery too, with a state-of-the-art surgical machine now helping to provide safer and more efficient prostate and bowel operations.

The robot, a dual console Da Vinci Xi Surgical System, assists surgeon to perform complex but minimally invasive surgical procedures with less blood loss, shorter hospital stays and

faster initial recovery compared with traditional surgical methods.

A surgeon operates the robot using a console which controls the robot's arms to hold objects and act as scalpels, scissors and other surgical devices. Another arm controls high-definition 3D cameras which provide a magnified view of the surgical site.

With swifter procedures, robotic-assisted surgery will help the Stockport NHS surgical team provide more operations and reduce waiting times for patients. Faster recovery times and fewer complications will also help free up beds throughout the hospital.

Increasing the number of robotic-assisted procedures is a key part of the National Cancer Plan for England.

One of the main procedures the new Da Vinci robot is used for is surgery to remove prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK, with roughly 1 in 8 men diagnosed in their lifetime. Around 55,000 to 63,000 new cases are diagnosed annually.

With the new robot, prostate cancer operations are expected to increase from



around 450-500 a year, to around 1,000 a year.

Patients with bowel cancer will also benefit from robotic-assisted surgery. Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK, with 46,000 to 49,000 new cases diagnosed every year. This affects approximately 1 in 17 men and 1 in 20 women during their lifetime.

"This technology is a huge step forward for our patients," said Nigel Roberts, Associate Divisional Director for Theatres, Critical Care, Anaesthetics and Pain. "The robot gives us incredible precision and control, which means safer operations, fewer complications and much faster recovery times. We're proud to be bringing this level of innovation to Stockport."



AI supporting emergency services and prostate cancer detection

The power of AI (artificial intelligence) is being harnessed to support patient care in two very different ways, reducing avoidable emergency visits in Tameside, and helping detect prostate cancer in Stockport.

In Tameside, a new computational model is now being used to predict which patients are most likely to reattend the emergency department within the next month. This allows clinical teams to intervene sooner with community-based care, reducing pressure on the emergency department.

The Tameside and Glossop NHS Business Intelligence team designed a model which generates a personalised risk score based on information already routinely collected during an A&E visit, like demographic data, arrival method, triage details, any long-term health conditions and history of emergency or inpatient hospital visits.

Once patients at high risk of reattendance have been flagged, multidisciplinary teams made up of staff from the Trust and other health and social care organisations come together to discuss each patient's individual needs. They then coordinate personalised, follow-up care in the community to proactively address health issues before they escalate into an emergency.

The AI tool continuously monitors these patients to check that the necessary actions have been completed and that the correct care has been provided.

Early results are encouraging. The impact of the tool varies each week but has ranged between a 33% - 50% reduction in emergency department reattendance among patients identified as high risk.



Over time the AI model will continue to expand, learn and improve, further enhancing its accuracy and effectiveness. Going forward, the Trust plans to introduce more automation to reduce pressure on clinical staff and improve the safety and quality of services.

“The tool allows us to predict emergency department reattendance, rather than simply providing a retrospective analysis,” said Operational Intelligence Lead Liam Brierley.

“Our ambition is ultimately to change how we anticipate patient need, moving from reactive care to intelligent, preventative intervention.

“This project is strong example of how we can take advantage of new, advanced technologies like AI for the benefit of both our patients and staff. The AI tool doesn't replace clinical judgement but rather empowers clinicians with the insight they need to deliver high-quality care before a crisis occurs.”

Over in Stockport, clinicians are taking part in the rolling-out a new artificial intelligence tool that could help diagnose prostate cancer faster – helping doctors identify the men who need urgent treatment first.

The technology is being introduced at hospitals in Stockport, Wigan, Bolton, and

Salford as part of a pilot led by Greater Manchester Cancer Alliance.

The new AI tool will analyse prostate MRI scans using validated NHS data and flag scans that are most likely to show cancer, allowing radiologists to prioritise patients at highest risk.

Prostate cancer affects 1 in 8 men and is the most common cancer in men in the UK. While early detection dramatically improves outcomes, around half of prostate cancers are still diagnosed at a late stage after the disease has already spread.

Men with suspected symptoms or raised PSA blood test results are usually referred for an MRI scan to rule out cancer or determine whether further investigation is needed. The new AI system aims to speed up this process and improve accuracy.

Dilraj Sandher, Chief Medical Officer for South East Sector Health Care Partnership said: “This is a truly innovative project, using the latest in AI technology with the aim to make cancer diagnosis swifter and more effective. We are very pleased that Stockport will be one of the first areas in the NHS to take part in this new approach, which we hope will have real and tangible benefits for our patients.”

Giving Tameside's pre-term babies the best start in life with 'liquid gold' first breast milk

Almost all pre-term babies born at Tameside Hospital now receive colostrum – the first breast milk mothers produce – within two days of birth, thanks to an acclaimed improvement project led by the Infant Feeding team.

National health leaders say giving newborns colostrum as early as possible helps early bonding and supports breastfeeding in the long term. Tameside has lower rates of breastfeeding at 6 to 8 weeks after birth compared to the England national average.



Between August 2025 and January 2026, 96% of babies born at less than 34 weeks gestation received colostrum within two days of birth. This up from a baseline of 47% in June 2025.

Sometimes referred to as 'liquid gold' for its yellow colour and high concentration of infection-fighting immune cells, colostrum is the first breast milk mothers produce. It's especially important for pre-term babies, who are more vulnerable to dangerous infections.

By working closely with new and expectant parents, the Integrated Infant Feeding team aimed to improve the number of babies born at less than 34 weeks gestation who receive colostrum within two days of birth.

Parents in Tameside have welcomed the support on offer. At 26 weeks, expectant mums Nicola and Jenna were told that their son, Ziggy, was likely to be born pre-term. While they had not originally planned to

breastfeed, a conversation with an infant feeding support worker helped them make an informed decision to collect colostrum ahead of the birth and continue with expressed breastmilk afterwards.

Nicola said: "During a midwife appointment, we were also able to speak to the early infant feeding team. Receiving the information early meant we weren't overwhelmed.

"When Ziggy was born the nurses made sure skin to skin contact was offered as soon as possible and we were given guidance on colostrum harvesting. We believe that all this made a huge difference and has contributed to Ziggy thriving and needing minimal respiratory support during his time in NICU."

The success of the project means that the smallest and most vulnerable babies receive all the benefits of colostrum as early as possible, supporting their long term health.

Hats off to new therapy garden

A beautiful new therapy garden for patients with an Alice in Wonderland theme is now open at Stepping Hill Hospital with the support Stockport NHS Charity and the national Greener Communities Fund.

The charity-funded garden based at the Acute Frailty Unit is designed to offer therapeutic support and a calming environment, is now benefitting patients with a wide range of long-term conditions, including those living with dementia and mobility issues.

The project was led by Groundwork Greater Manchester (GGM), with the support of Stockport NHS Charity and the hospital's therapy staff. Over the past year, local landscapers worked to create a tranquil space where patients with long-term health conditions, dementia or mobility issues can relax, or engage in structured outdoor activities to help them build stamina. The outdoor space will also provide a mental health boost for patients and their loved ones, as well as staff and volunteers.

True to the Alice in Wonderland theme, the 'Mad Hatter' statue is a nod to Stockport's rich history in hat making.

A statue of Alice sits near a Mad Hatter's Tea Party table and chairs, with plant pots also based on characters from the book. The garden also includes planters and a small greenhouse so that patients can take part in planting as part of their therapeutic activity.

Research commissioned by NHS Charities Together found that 8 in 10 of us feel healthier and more energetic after spending time in nature, while 70% of us report improved mental and physical health – from better sleep to reduced stress and improved mood.

Kate Leadbeater, Charity Manager at Stockport NHS Charity said: "This is a magical space which has been created here for our patients. It was an honour to receive the Greener Communities Funding, and I'd like to wholeheartedly thank our funders NHS Charities Together, Hubbub and Starbucks, who have helped make our dream for patients come true. I'd also like to send special thanks to our community partners Groundwork Greater Manchester for their expertise and professionalism and for walking every step of this amazing journey with us."



Winning local photographers to help make hospital more dementia-friendly

In September 2025, Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust, in partnership with the Tameside Reporter, put out a call for original photos of nine iconic local landmarks to display in Tameside Hospital's dementia wards.

Photos of familiar sights can help people with dementia feel more orientated, evoke happy memories and bring comfort during their stay in hospital.

Now, from more than 200 entries from local photographers – both hobbyists and professionals – one winning photo for each location has been chosen. Each winner was selected by a patient with dementia, ensuring that the photos on display reflect their preferences and helping to make the wards as welcoming as possible.



Providing a Hospital at Home in Stockport

Stockport NHS is using the latest monitoring technology to ensure more people can receive care in the comfort of their own home.

The ‘Hospital at Home’ (sometimes known as virtual ward) is using new patient technology-enabled remote monitoring systems to help more patients receive the support and care they need at home, rather than having to attend or stay in hospital.

The system allows the Hospital at Home team to gain vital information from the individual patient in order to manage their conditions. Accessed by patients via the Luscii App, it allows rapid assessment and real-time decision-making for advanced clinical practitioners and GPs who work within the service. It enables them deliver proactive out-of-hospital care, and helps avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.

There are many conditions which the system can help with monitoring, including care pathways for respiratory, heart failure, frailty and postnatal hypertension conditions and more.

Patients are set up with the system using an active email address or an active mobile phone telephone number. Where a patient does not have a live email account or mobile number, a family member or carer can support in this so the patient can be onboarded.

NHS Frimley Integrated Care Board, an early adopter of the approach, found it to be



successful, with a 50% reductions in hospital admissions and A&E attendances.

The system is improving patient experience, support safe and timely discharge, and ensuring those who can remain at home / return home do so as early and safely as possible.

Ros Stott, Assistant Directorate Manager for Stockport NHS Foundation Trust’s Urgent Neighbourhood Services Directorate said; “Being able to monitor and support patients safely at home means they can get the care they need sooner, while avoiding unnecessary hospital stay. The upgraded Hospital at Home system helps us do exactly that – providing timely support where it’s needed most and helping to relieve pressure on our emergency department and inpatient wards.”

Adults registered with a Stockport GP may be eligible for Hospital at Home. Anyone interested can ask their GP or healthcare professional about a referral.

Stockport catering team cooking with gas

The Stockport NHS catering team have continued to go from strength to strength in the past year, with a number of achievements demonstrating their excellent standards.

Firstly, apprentice chef Joe Omolo has won the highest accolade in NHS catering in October 2025 - NHS Chef of the Year.



Together with Nedko Rusev from Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust, the pair won the title together in the competition run by NHS England to find the best in NHS catering.

The competition showcases the vital role chef’s play in patient care, recovery and experience, using their skills, creativity and dedication to deliver nutritious, high-quality food in often challenging environments.

Following this success, the catering team as a whole and their manager Erica Bell achieved two separate national awards earlier this year.

The whole team came first in the ‘Hospital Catering’ category at this year’s Public Sector Catering (PSC) Awards, which look out for the very best in the industry.

And team leader and support services manager Erica Bell won the title of ‘Caterer of the Year’ at the annual Hospital Catering

Association (HCA) awards, which celebrates high quality in healthcare catering.

Preparing appetising meals, high quality ingredients, good presentation and reducing waste are all part of the team’s daily routine, which have all gone towards their PSC award success.

The team have also gone on to be recognised as an ‘Exemplar site’ by NHS England, meaning they are one of the best teams in the country who set standards for others to follow.

Finally, now the team have two new entrants into this year’s NHS Chef of the Year competition. Chef Owen Stafford and retail assistant Lauren Carter are now competing in this year’s NHS Chef of the Year, and they are now successfully through to the final round.

South East Sector Health Care Partnership Director of Estates and Facilities Gareth Hughes said; “It’s brilliant to see our catering team being recognised with all these accolades, which are very much deserved. We’re all very proud of what they’ve achieved and know that they’ll continue to provide good quality food for our patients, visitors and colleagues.”



Found in translation – great steps forward for sign language in Tameside and interpreting in Stockport

New technology is helping make healthcare more accessible at both Tameside and Stockport, in the fields of sign language and interpreting.

Tameside & Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust is expanding access to spoken languages and British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters with new on-demand video translation services.

This will prevent appointments running over or even being cancelled if face-to-face interpreters are unavailable, improving access to healthcare for the d/Deaf community while reducing the cost to the NHS from cancelled or delayed appointments.

The initiative uses new on-demand video services for translation and interpretation through two applications: InterpretersLive! is available to provide BSL, while Client Suite provides access to over 500 spoken languages.

Interpreters appear remotely via electronic tablets, which are mounted on wheels. This allows staff to bring them directly to patients in clinics, examination rooms, or to the bedside for procedures. Laptops, desktop computers or Trust-approved and issued mobile devices can also access these services in areas that do not currently have the devices on wheels.

In the past, obtaining sign language interpretation in UK hospitals has been difficult, especially when required during emergencies or unplanned visits. The InterpretersLive! service instead provides speedy video access to a pool of in-house BSL interpreters available 12 hours a day.

“It’s like Facetime with a linguist,” explains Nicole Webb, Quality and Patient Experience Facilitator at Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust.

“With InterpretersLive! we can connect to a linguist at any time. This has massively improved access for patients who use BSL as a first language to communicate their needs and is a huge step forward for our d/Deaf and hard of hearing community,”

This app is not only for use whilst in the hospital, patients can also access the service from their own devices to contact the trust over the phone using a relay system.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with staff feeling that access to both spoken languages and BSL has seen a real improvement.

One patient who left anonymous feedback on the service pilot scheme said that they were “so happy” that the service was now available.



“I’ve never been able to have this before or get access to a BSL interpreter, and this allows us to communicate properly,” they continued.

Following the pilot scheme’s success, it’s now being expanded from hospital to community services.

Meanwhile, Stockport NHS Foundation Trust has enhanced care for patient with translation needs with a radical new translation system known as CardMedic.

CardMedic is a digital healthcare communication platform that allows staff and patients to communicate safely and effectively irrespective of language barriers, cognitive impairment or literacy. The platform provides instant access to live interpreters in 200+ languages via Language Line, alongside thousands of clinically validated scripts in multiple languages and formats, including British Sign Language (BSL), Easy Read, and Read Aloud. It also supports health literacy for same language patients by explaining information in plain language, clearly and succinctly.

In order to provide this service, 455 SPARK Fusion® patient bedside devices have been provided on 20 wards at the across Stepping

Hill Hospital. Key areas of engagement include emergency, maternity, and acute medical units, supported by digital nurses, midwives, and clinical champions across the organisation.

Introducing CardMedic has helped reduce pressures on staff by providing them a single point of access to a suite of clinically designed communication support tools. Streamlined access has helped to reduce use of disparate and ad hoc solutions, empowering staff to deliver more efficient and equitable care. The system has also now been shortlisted for two Picker Experience Awards for their enhancement of patient experience.

Pam Fearn, Chief Nursing Information Officer at Stockport NHS Foundation Trust, led the project’s implementation. “CardMedic will enable patients to voice their needs where previously they may have struggled to communicate them,” she said. “All conversations — such as asking whether someone wants a cup of tea, explaining a procedure, or offering reassurance — play a vital role in ensuring inclusivity. CardMedic enables equality across our services.”

X-rays without appointment helping tackle cancer in Stockport



- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain (for smokers and ex-smokers)
- Fatigue
- Weight loss
- Appetite loss
- Coughing up blood* (anyone with this symptom should call 111 or see their GP urgently)
- Has not had a chest x-ray or CT scan of the chest within the last 3 months

The new service follows a successful pilot in Bury, Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale, where more than 4,200 people received a chest X-ray.

Most people experiencing symptoms were given peace of mind that they did not have a serious condition and 21 people received a lung cancer diagnosis. Of those diagnosed with lung cancer, 40% were found to have early-stage disease, where treatment is often more effective and outcomes are generally better, showing the importance of getting checked upon noticing a symptom.

Dr Rebecca Duerden, a consultant radiologist at Stepping Hill Hospital, said: “We know people live busy lives and often don’t feel able to take time out of their day to make an appointment to get checked, so we’re offering this service to the public as an easy way to check for potential lung problems.

“If you have any of the symptoms mentioned please don’t put it off – come along for a chest x-ray. It could be that peace of mind you need, and if we do find anything that needs attention, we can arrange any further tests or treatment you might need.”

Patients over the age of 40 in Stockport now have access to x-rays without an appointment thanks to a radical new service.

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new easy access service has been rolled out in Stockport allowing people experiencing lung-related symptoms to have a chest x-ray, without needing to see a GP or book an appointment.

Supported by the Greater Manchester Cancer Alliance and Stockport NHS Foundation Trust, the service aims to help detect lung cancer earlier, when it is more treatable, while also providing reassurance and peace of mind for people concerned about their symptoms.

Anyone aged 40 or over who is registered with a GP in Stockport and has experienced one or more of the following symptoms for more than three weeks is eligible:

New Stockport Lab system means faster diagnosis

Stockport NHS Foundation Trust pathology department has gone live with a new system which making it easier for clinicians to process millions of patient test results.

The new laboratory information management system (LIMS) system from Clinisys, revolutionises the way in which medical information is shared, leading to faster diagnosis and treatment for patients.

Over 9.5 million tests are carried out in the hospital’s laboratories each year to help support the diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of conditions. A LIMS system enables the managing, tracking, analysis and sharing of this information to support patient care.

The new system allows greater integration with other systems and ultimately results to be shared with colleagues more swiftly and easily, both with internal clinical colleagues, and with partners such as GP practices.

The system was introduced in two stages; microbiology and cellular science services later in 2025, with blood sciences following earlier this year. Both stages were launched successfully.

This major system upgrade has meant close working between the trust’s pathology department, clinical and digital colleagues,

as well as with local GPs, to ensure the new system has been implemented with disruption kept to a minimum.

Mark Gordon, Stockport NHS Foundation Trust Pathology Operational Lead said; “It’s fantastic to see the new LIMS now completely live in blood sciences. This is a significant step forward with the digital infrastructure of the laboratory in line with the national NHS digitalisation goals and will further benefit the adaption of full digital integration for Pathology.

This has been a major project with the previous system in place since 1992, and I’d like to say a huge thanks all our pathology and IT colleagues for the expertise and skill they have brought, as well as Clinisys and the Greater Manchester Pathology Network for making this launch a success.”



Young stroke survivor returns to Tameside Hospital as a volunteer three years after a major brain bleed



Almost three years ago, Summer Clarke was rushed to Tameside Hospital after a life-threatening stroke. Now, she has returned to the hospital as a volunteer, hoping to inspire other patients.

As a healthy 24-year-old, Summer lived a busy and active life, working as a flight attendant for British Airways. Everything changed in May 2023, when Summer was struck by severe head pains and became violently sick. She was taken to Tameside Hospital's emergency department, where doctors discovered the cause: a spontaneous brain haemorrhage.



Summer went on to spend six months in the intensive care unit at Salford Royal Hospital, followed by a five-month stint in the Floyd Rehabilitation Unit in Rochdale. The pressure on Summer's brain meant she had had to be

put into an induced coma, and her family were warned that she may only have 48 hours to live.

Despite the odds, Summer survived. She awoke to find that she couldn't speak, but was able to sing along to her favourite songs. Gradually, with a whole lot of determination, she regained her ability to walk and talk.

Now, Summer wants to give something back by helping others facing a similar road to recovery. On top of volunteering with the Stroke Association, she recently started a new voluntary role with at Tameside Hospital where she can share her story with other stroke survivors.

"When I was in hospital, in between therapy there was no one else there who completely understood what I was going through," says Summer.

"I spent six months in hospital and another five in rehab, so I have really good insight into what it's like.

"I wanted to volunteer on the stroke ward and help patients struggling with the same issues, like problems with cognition, movement or vision."

Summer likes to show people video footage from the very start of her recovery journey, to demonstrate just how far she has come and show others that recovery is possible for them too.

"I had to learn everything again, and I still have some cognition problems, but I'm making progress every day," Summer says.

Stroke survivor Andy takes on 3km walk for Stockport's stroke unit

In the early hours of Christmas Day 2022, Andy Shaw awoke to the life-threatening stroke that would leave him unable to move the left side of his body.

Now, he's taking on a remarkable challenge: walking 3km to raise money for the stroke ward at Stockport NHS Foundation Trust through Stockport NHS Charity.

Before his stroke, Andy was healthy and active. He had served in the army and then worked as a police officer for 25 years.

The stroke left him severely debilitated, and following blood clot surgery at Salford,

Andy was moved to Stepping Hill Hospital to continue his recovery on the E1 stroke ward.

"Everybody was dead nice. The volunteers were brilliant, and every single member of staff took the time to get to know me. I think I was the nurses' favourite," Andy jokes.

"They were brilliant with family too," says Bernadette, "It was a stressful time, but the staff made it so much easier."

Andy spent four months on the stroke ward. And managed to progress from being unable to walk, and barely able to talk, to the greatly improved position he is in today, thanks to a combination of expert clinical care and rehabilitation, support from family and friends, and his own determination.

"When you have a stroke, it's like your life stops. But coming onto the ward, it's like it started again," Andy says.

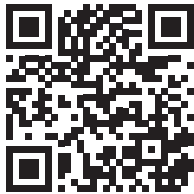
Three years after he was discharged, Andy feels ready to take on a new challenge.

"The ward staff were so good to me, I just wanted to do something to give something back," he says, "I worked in the public sector for nearly 30 years. It's easy to criticise, but it's important to talk about people like me who've had good experiences."

Working with his walking group and a personal trainer who specialises in stroke survivors, Andy has been training to walk 3km to raise money for Stockport NHS Charity, which will go towards improving facilities for future patients on the stroke ward.

Andy has already hit £1,500 in donations, smashing his initial goal of raising £500.

To support Andy's fundraising challenge visit: www.justgiving.com/page/andyshaw.



Incubator appeal to support Stockport's tiniest patients



Stockport NHS Charity have launched an appeal for a new incubator which will help Stepping Hill Hospital's neonatal team ensure newborn babies needing extra support can have the best possible environment for their start in life.

The Drager Babyleo TN500 is a state-of-the-art incubator, also known as a resuscitaire, which will help to enhance care for poorly and premature babies. It is smaller than standard incubators so it can be used as a travel incubator, giving easier access for both parents and midwifery team should a baby need transporting to a special unit.

Other advantages of the incubator are a low noise level, minimised disturbance, and helping to allow 'kangaroo (skin-to-skin) care', giving an overall enhanced experience for both parents and babies.

Two major fundraising events have added to the total so far. The Royal Nawaab Pyramid raised over £28,000 with a spectacular fundraising Royale Gala evening at the iconic restaurant late last year.

In February this year nursing consultancy Ealoor ran a Harmony Night event at Wythenshawe Forum celebrating their 25th anniversary and honouring international nurses, which also raised money for the incubator appeal, raising over £1,760 on the evening filled with musical entertainment.

Many others have joined in the fundraising too, including Rachael Skeen who gave a sponsored run in thanks for the care the neonatal team gave for her premature born son Alfie, now a healthy 11 year old. Rachael has raised over £1000.

Kate Leadbeater, Stockport NHS Charity Manager said; "This amazing lifesaving machine helps our newborn baby's breath and keeps them warm. Please share in the care and help us continue providing lifesaving support to our premature and critically ill babies by supporting today."

To help with the appeal and make a gift to support this life saving piece of equipment visit Stockport NHS Charity - JustGiving quoting 'neonatal resuc'.

Helps local families in Tameside facing cancer capture memories that last a lifetime

Families facing a cancer diagnosis in Tameside and Glossop are set to benefit from a groundbreaking new programme designed to preserve precious memories, capture loved ones' voices and strengthen family connections during some of life's most difficult moments.

Tameside & Glossop NHS Charity has become the first NHS charity and NHS trust in the country to partner with Featherbed Tales, bringing its unique digital storytelling platform to patients receiving care through the Trust's Cancer Services.

Founded by author and storyteller Caroline M England, Featherbed Tales creates personalised digital talking photo books that combine photographs, messages, videos and recorded voices. For many patients, particularly those receiving palliative care, the books offer an opportunity to leave behind treasured memories, stories and messages for loved ones to revisit for years to come.

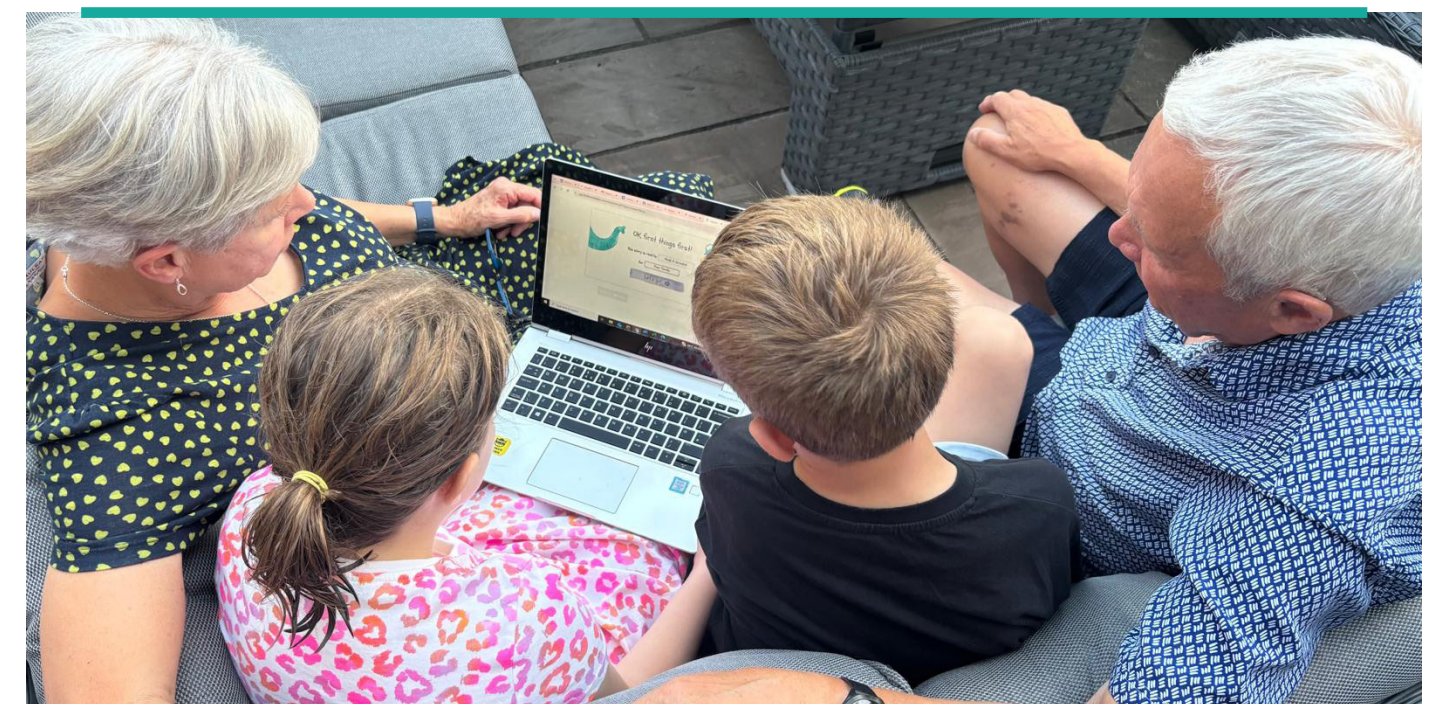
The idea was born from Caroline's own experience of loss. After a close friend died, leaving behind a young son, she saw first-hand how a voice recording became

a treasured way for him to maintain a connection with his mother. Combined with her own experience of hearing an old friend's voice instantly bring back decades of memories, it sparked the idea that would eventually become Featherbed Tales.

Through the new partnership, cancer patients and their families will be able to create their own personalised books, capturing family stories, favourite memories, messages of love and even the familiar sound of a loved one's voice.

Steph Gooder, Lead Cancer Nurse at Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust, said the programme would provide families with a meaningful way to stay connected throughout their cancer journey.

"Cancer changes lives in an instant and its impact reaches far beyond the person receiving treatment. We know that many patients worry about their loved ones and how they will cope. Featherbed Tales offers families an opportunity to capture precious moments, conversations and memories together."





Get the right care for you

Emergency departments (A&E) in both Stockport and Tameside are very often extremely busy. Please help make sure they are kept for emergencies and choose the right care for you.

Pharmacy, GP, urgent care - are you not sure where to go?...

	Pharmacy Minor illnesses and injuries. Can offer some prescription medicine		Urgent care For urgent non-life threatening illness or injury
	Urgent dentist If you don't have a dentist, or your dentist is closed T: 0333 332 3800		GP For illnesses that can be difficult to deal with at home
	NHS 111 Not sure where to go, or you need urgent medical advice, visit 111.nhs.uk or call 111		A&E/999 Serious or life-threatening conditions only

Support our charities

Both our charities are always grateful for your support. Get in touch or donate via the details below.

Stockport NHS Charity

☎ 07857601315

✉ charity@stockport.nhs.uk or
kate.leadbeater@stockport.nhs.uk

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Justgiving



Tameside and Glossop NHS Charity

☎ 0161 922 5195

✉ charity@tgh.nhs.uk

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