

CELEBRATING

**NHS 75**

WITH

**East Lancashire Hospital NHS Trust**



# Happy 75th birthday, NHS!



On 5 July I hope you will join me and the rest of the country to give our remarkable organisation a big, warm hearted and well-deserved happy birthday.

The celebrations will mark 75 years of the extraordinary service which today treats 1.3 million people a day in England. A service we have become reliant on, it's part of our culture and touches all our hearts and in truth, one none of us could imagine living without.

When it was founded in 1948, the NHS was the first universal health system to be available to all, always putting patients at the heart of everything we do. Those principles remain relevant, and valued, as they did in the years after the Second World War.

Over the years the NHS has innovated and adapted to meet the needs of each successive generation. And in 75 years we've seen pioneering medical advancements help improve and prolong the health and lives of our patients. Something that wouldn't have been possible without the skill, dedication, and passion of our NHS colleagues.

They truly are the best in the world, and I want to take this opportunity to thank the colleagues of East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust (ELHT), who I couldn't be prouder of.

ELHT is a family. People often don't believe me when I say that, but we really are. Over our fives sites and community locations our colleagues, and volunteers, work tirelessly to continue to provide safe, personal and effective care.

Together we celebrate the wins and join forces to face the lows – but we do it as one.

I'm truly grateful for the people I can proudly call my ELHT family, and for all the work they do and the services they provide which touches so many peoples' lives in the community.

So, as we mark the NHS's big birthday, we thought it would be a fitting tribute to showcase 75 inspirational stories from amazing people who are part of the ELHT family in one way or another.

We hope you enjoy reading their story – we couldn't be happier to share them.

**Martin Hodgson, Chief Executive at East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust.**





**Vicki Stevenson-Hornby is a Specialist Nurse working in the Pancreas Rapid Diagnostic Service, Cancer Services. Vicki has been working for the Trust since April 2020 but 23 years with the NHS. She was awarded with the Outstanding Achievement Award at last year's Trust Star Awards for her constant dedication and passion in raising awareness of pancreatic cancer and the need for early diagnosis.**

What I do is more than just a job, and I love it.

I get the privilege to meet some amazing, courageous, and inspiring people, and every day is different.

A good day is successfully supporting a patient and family, it is sharing awareness of pancreatic cancer with the public and with other health professionals. A bad day is delivering the worst news imaginable. And that's tough. But it's my job to be there for them and support them through what will most likely be the worst time of their life.

Pancreatic cancer is ruthless. Because its symptoms are so vague it's a difficult disease to diagnose meaning a shocking quarter of patients die in one month after diagnosis.

My mission is to improve early diagnosis by raising awareness of the disease and its symptoms. Something, I believe, is everybody's business.

My vision would be to have billboards plastered with the symptoms in every city and town, so everyone sees them, but until we reach that level of exposure November is Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, and I urge everyone to play their part.

I always dye my hair purple for awareness month and when I'm not organising a cake sale or raffle I take on challenging and painstaking activities like Born Survivor – and trust me, I'm no athlete!

And I have the support of my amazing family too, who, like me, understand how important raising awareness is. My wonderful husband has run half marathons, my super son organised a 'wear purple day' during his A levels and my lovely daughter arranged a sponsored silence when she was in Year 4!

Even if you just pull on a pair of purple tights or make some purple-coloured cupcakes for your colleagues, any tiny thing will help raise awareness. And who knows, it may just save yours or a loved one's life.

If Vicki has inspired you to find out more, visit [www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk](http://www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk)

*"I want to make a hellish situation as bearable as it can be by trying to take a small amount of that horrendousness away and make it known to that person diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and their relatives that they aren't facing it alone."*



**Holly and her partner Ben welcomed identical twin girls Hope and Harper at just 31 weeks in October 2022. The pregnancy was tinged with worry after the couple were told that Hope was unlikely to survive. After spending six weeks in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Burnley General Teaching Hospital the twins came home.**

The nurses in NICU are angels. The level of care and support I received from them and the whole midwifery team at Burnley was above and beyond. They are amazing and I'll never be able to thank them enough.

When Hope was delivered everyone in the room expected the worse – instead, she shocked and delighted us all by coming out kicking and screaming. She weighed a tiny 2lbs 3oz but was clearly a fighter. Harper followed two minutes later weighing just 3lbs 3oz.

The NICU team took them under their wings and although it was scary seeing the twins covered in wires and attached to monitors, the nurses explained everything and reassured us they were going to be OK.

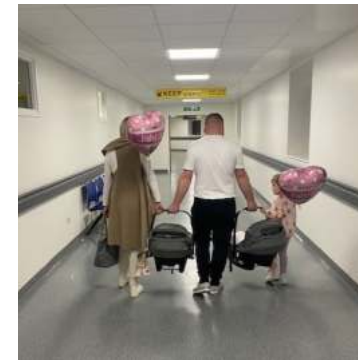
It was heartbreaking going home without them, but every day I was at the hospital. I was up and down but the nurses kept reassuring me they were getting stronger by the day, and when they weren't caring for the twins, they were forcing me to eat! They even sent me messages in the evening and over the weekend to check in.

The days our daughter Ellisia, five, visited the nurses made such a fuss of her. Nothing was every too much trouble for them.

When Harper was allowed home first one of the nurses, Rebecca, crocheted two hearts with Hope and Harper on and wrote a poem 'from Hope'. It was so special and kind. I was overwhelmed. When Hope was finally allowed home, it was an emotional day, but I take them back for regular check-ups.

The twins are doing great and one day I will tell them all about the angels who cared for them, and me. We'll never stop being thankful.

*"The NICU team helped us through the hardest weeks of our lives. We laughed together, cried together, and got through it together."*







**Taimur Hijazi is a Clinical Fellow Anaesthesia and Critical Care at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital. A former Foundation Trainee in Pakistan, Taimur has been with the Trust for almost four years.**

I came to East Lancashire Hospital Trust in February 2019. My first job in the UK, the Trust was very helpful when it came to applying for mine and my wife's visas and we both found it very easy to settle in. Going through the experience and transition together made a huge difference.

I spend most days in theatre (like an anaesthetic trainee) and my on-call duties are in ICU. I also do general theatre and maternity on calls as required or if there is a gap that needs covering - I am always happy to help the department.

The best thing for me has been the anaesthetic/ICU department. Everyone has been extremely helpful and encouraging from day one. All the consultants have helped me so much and have been instrumental in getting me where I am today. Words cannot express how grateful I am to them and the Trust.

Since February 2012 I have been doing the anaesthetic training program. This mirrors the national core training program and means I am exposed to the same learning and training opportunities as any core trainee. It has been immensely helpful and it enabled me to realise my dream of becoming an anaesthetist and intensivist.

Moving to the UK has enabled myself and my wife to both become Clinical Fellow Anaesthesia and Critical Care and put down roots and settle. We get to work and train at the same hospital which has been amazing. I am truly humbled by the confidence everyone at the Trust has shown us and I owe this department my career.

If Taimur has inspired you to work in healthcare, take a look at our vacancies at [www.elht.nhs.uk](http://www.elht.nhs.uk)

*"I would encourage other overseas doctors to come and work here. The Trust is welcoming and helpful in giving us an opportunity that otherwise might be difficult to come by."*



*“Volunteering has become a part of our lives. It’s our way of giving something back to society.”*

**Married couple Dave and June Tattersall have been volunteering between them for almost 10 years. The pair help to fundraise for ELHT&Me, the official charity for East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, and Dave is a familiar face in the shop based at Blackburn Royal Teaching Hospital.**

June has always been the sociable one out of the two of us so for me, volunteering has really brought me out of my shell. It’s a great way to meet new and interesting people, and something I’ll always be grateful for.

When needed, weekends and evenings are spent at local fairs, events and shows shaking collection buckets, drumming up prizes for the tombola or basically doing anything that’s needed to raise awareness – and cash – for the charity.

I drop and collect money tins for local businesses in Oswaldtwistle and since I retired from engineering, I’ve worked every Thursday in the charity shop. My role is to sell products to raise money for the charity, but I also spend a lot of my day chatting to visitors and patients; something which I believe is equally as important.

People appreciate having someone to chat too – especially in a hospital environment where you don’t know what that person is going through.

Spending five minutes chatting to a little old lady who’s visiting her poorly husband may just be the only other conversation she has that day or helping a visitor choose an appropriate gift for the patient they are here to see is part and parcel of the job, and I love it.

It’s heart-warming too when regular visitors and patients pop in to say hello or wave as they walk past.

We also attend fun events such as The Big NHS Tee-Off in August and in March June had the pleasure of going along to the Ribble Valley Business Awards where ELHT&Me scooped the win for not for profit. She had a wonderful night and met some lovely people.

Being a volunteer is great. It’s a lovely thing to do together as a couple and now June has completed all the necessary volunteering training she too, once retired, will be a familiar face in the shop!

Volunteering helps us give something back to society. We don’t give it a second thought anymore. It’s just something we do and will continue to do for as long as we can.

If you’ve been inspired to join our team of volunteers, visit [www.elht.nhs.uk](http://www.elht.nhs.uk)





**Megan Hunter has been a Staff Nurse at Clitheroe Treatment Room/ Minor Injuries since last November. Halfway through her three-year BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing degree COVID-19 hit. Despite the extra challenges she faced she qualified with flying colours in 2021.**

The last thing I ever expected was to be training to be a nurse during a pandemic. The training is challenging and intense enough, without the added stress we faced.

I had just finished a placement at the beginning of March 2020 with the Blackburn District Nurse team and was due to go back to university when COVID-19 struck.

There was a lot of confusion around what was happening and consequently my studying transferred online and future placements on wards were pulled.

In 'normal times' I would have been expected to complete 2,300 (unpaid) working hours on a ward over three years. Instead, I ended up on a paid contract working at Pendle Community Hospital. Despite the extra challenges and hectic wards, I continued to learn and look after my patients and my training led me to qualify as a Nurse in the community.

My job varies on a day-to-day basis. I really enjoy working with wounds and complex patients so being based at the treatment room is perfect!

I manage the minor injuries/walk-in service which can be anything from cuts and scrapes to broken bones and chest pains. We also deal with more serious illnesses and for those patients I liaise with the onsite GPs and Paramedics, when needed.

I perform routine and urgent ECGs (a test to check a patient's heart rhythm), do blood tests, routine injections such as Vitamin B12 and implants. I assist the GPS in theatre with minor procedures and operations and do wound care and leg ulcer management too.

I love my job and my colleagues are part of that reason. Together, we are making a small difference to our patients and community.

If you're interested in joining our #ELHTFamily visit [www.elht.nhs.uk](http://www.elht.nhs.uk)

*"I wanted a career that I could take all over the world and one where I could help those in need and very ill."*



*“Here you see life from a totally different perspective. Just being with people, holding their hand and finding out about them is amazing.”*

**Stephen Bayliss is a singer/songwriter who found an additional vocation as a Patient Services Assistant during the COVID pandemic. He now shares his musical talents with ELHT’s patients by singing to them when they are feeling down.**

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As a professional singer/songwriter I suddenly found myself unable to do the job I had lived, breathed and loved for nearly 35 years when the COVID pandemic hit.

As hospitality venues across Lancashire closed and work stopped, not only did I need to find a new source of income, I wanted to make myself useful. So when a friend suggested I apply to be a Patient Services Assistant (PSA) at ELHT, I looked into it further and found that this was the perfect solution.

Throughout the years, I have worn many hats - from tree surgeon and car valet to car salesman. But I now know there is a true calling in the NHS. I really love my job and when people ask me what I do, I proudly tell them that I am a cleaner and a singer.

I have been singing for over 30 years making a really good living. But here you see life from a totally different perspective. Just being with people, holding their hand and finding out about them is amazing. It is so nourishing to have that interaction with people. When I am on shift, my colleagues sometimes ask me to sing to the patients when they are feeling down. To be able to do that and see their spirits lift is incredible.

I thoroughly enjoy working at ELHT and I truly believe I am destined to be doing this job. I never realised how much seeing people in pain and how quickly their lives can change would move me. And even though I am now performing again and my schedule is busy, I aim to continue my work as cleaner/porter for the good of patients and the ELHT family, whenever I have the opportunity.

If Stephen has inspired you to work in healthcare, take a look at our vacancies on [www.elht.nhs.uk](http://www.elht.nhs.uk)





**Jo Gaskell has been the End of Life and Bereavement Clinical Lead Nurse since October 2021. The service offers support for the person in the last days and hours of life and for anyone who has been or is bereaved. She qualified in 1997 and has worked mainly within surgery and specialist palliative care.**

The End of Life and Bereavement Team promotes dignity, respect, and compassion in the last days of someone's life and excellent bereavement care. The team also provide support to families following a sudden and unexpected death.

The aim of the service is to improve patient care by providing education to colleagues across the Trust, as this can make such a difference to patients and those important to them.

I have always enjoyed teaching and undertaking projects, so it was a real honour to be part of the team that were nominated for the Health Service Journal (HSJ) award last year for improving end of life and bereavement care.

We want to give the best care possible to all patients and those important to them. Our team can make a big difference to someone when they are dying, and it is lovely when we receive positive feedback.

When I am not working, I like to spend time with family and friends. I also love to be outdoors, I run, walk, cycle and travel as often as I can. In 2015 I ran the London Marathon in aid of MacMillan Cancer Support which was a great experience.

I'm lucky to work within a great team who support each other and are all passionate about improving patient care.

If this has inspired you to join the #ELHTFamily take a look at the current opportunities at [www.elht.nhs.uk](http://www.elht.nhs.uk)

*“I've always been passionate about providing excellent care and believe that the little things we do can make a massive difference to patients and their families at what can be a distressing and difficult time.”*





**Karen Thurlow and Jill Fisher have worked together for five years in the Learning Centre Deli Bar at Blackburn Royal Teaching Hospital. Karen has been working for the Trust for 16 years and Jill for 14, but it's their friendship that makes this double act as popular and warming as the food they serve!**

I remember meeting Jill on my first day at Blackburn. I'd been moved from Accrington Victoria Hospital where I'd worked for 11 years since finishing school, so I was really nervous about moving somewhere new – especially as I knew it was only me and Jill working together.

But she was lovely and when she asked me if I wanted a brew, I knew I liked her straight away!

Luckily, we had an instant connection. Jill kindly took me under her wing and looked after me until I found my feet.

She also made me laugh, a lot!

We work Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 2.30pm and our role is to prep ingredients, make sandwiches and serve customers.

We both love our job.

Obviously, it helps that me and Jill are such good friends, but our customers are lovely too. We see a lot of the same faces which is nice because we have a good relationship with them too.

I think having a good working relationship in work is essential. ELHT talks about being a family, and that's certainly the case with Jill and I. She is always there for me and has helped me when I needed her, and vice versa.

We make a good team, and even miss each other when one takes annual leave. I doubt we'd cope if one of us was to leave – after all, there's no Ant without Dec!

The Trust is a great place to work. Like any job it has its ups and downs, but thanks to Jill my days are full of fun and friendship, and that's something I'll always be thankful for.

*“When I moved sites and was put to work with Jill, we instantly clicked! The Ant to my Dec, she's like family to me!”*





*"The NHS saved my life - and then it gave me a new career. I'll never stop being grateful."*

**In January 2020, Catherine Makin underwent a double lung transplant at Wythenshawe Hospital in Manchester. After her recovery she was unable to return to her Nursery Nurse job so began volunteering for the Trust which in turn led her to getting a job as a Clerical Worker in the General Outpatients Department at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital.**

After the transplant I didn't wake up for a week. But after five weeks in hospital, I was allowed home and feeling extremely grateful to my donor and her family, and of course the NHS to be alive.

But being high risk to infection there was no way I could return to work in a children's nursery. And to make matters worse COVID-19 pandemic had hit and I had to isolate for almost two years.

It was tough not mixing with people and knowing I couldn't return to the job I loved. But I was desperate to start living my second chance of life and needed a reason to get out of bed in the morning.

So, when my sister, a palliative care nurse in the community, suggested I volunteer to fill some time it seemed the perfect solution.

Before I knew it, I was shaking the Trust's ELHT&Me charity collection buckets at a local bonfire event and Santa sleigh. It was great to socialize again and be part of something worthwhile. But more than anything, it felt good to be giving something back to the health service who'd saved me.

I was itching to get back to work but as my experience was in childcare, I was limited, so when a volunteering administration role came up in the Child Development Centre at Burnley Teaching Hospital, I knew it was my chance to get the necessary experience. And thanks to that I was able to apply for my current role, which I love.

I work 20 hours a week and I'm also studying remotely for a business and admin course.

I'm proud of the NHS and everything it stands for. Without it, I wouldn't be here today.

Find out how you can support ELHT here: <https://elht.nhs.uk/elht.nhs.uk/elht-and-me-charity/campaigns/fundraise>





*"When my marriage fell apart, I lost everything. A single mum to four children, I knew it was now or never that I finally followed my dream to become a midwife."*

## **Sarah Thistlethwaite is a Student Midwife studying at the University of Central Lancashire's (UCLan) Burnley Campus. Her passion and determination for her future career is living proof that if you want something badly enough, you can go and get it.**

I'd always wanted to be a midwife, but lack of confidence and married life held me back and I worked happily as a supervisor in pharmacy.

When my first child Callum was born at Blackburn Royal Teaching Hospital, two lovely midwives took amazing care of us both. I was in awe of their job. It fascinated and intrigued me and that wonderful curiosity continued with my other sons Lucas and Jenson, and my daughter Ava, who was born at Burnley Teaching Hospital. All the midwives were simply brilliant, and with each birth my longing to become just like them increased tenfold.

By now my marriage had broken down, I was a single mum to four kids - retraining was my opportunity to rebuild my life, and I grabbed it with both hands. It was tough but I had fantastic support from friends and after an initial foundation degree course in Health and Social Care I was accepted on a three-year Midwifery degree course at University of Central Lancashire in Preston. I couldn't have been happier.

I get to support mums and their families during the most vulnerable and magical time of their lives. It is a challenging but rewarding job and when you hand baby over to mum and see her reaction it is priceless – something I never get bored of seeing. It's a blessing to be part of this huge event in their life. I qualify in August, and I can't wait to get started. Granted, it's been a battle at times juggling four children while studying but I wouldn't have had it any other way! I'm so proud I've achieved it, and so are they. Being a midwife is not a job, it's a privilege, and one I will never take for granted.

While Sarah's life changed as she prepared to become a Student Midwife, so did that of a stranger whose life she bravely saved. Her quick thinking resulted in a bravery award from Lancashire Police and a Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society Award.

One Sunday morning I was driving over a local motorway bridge when I saw a woman standing on the wrong side of the flyover; obviously contemplating jumping. Instinct kicked in and I proceeded with caution before I was able to fling my arms around her and hold on for dear life.

Despite her pleas, there was no way I was going to let her die. Thankfully, an off-duty police officer appeared just as her eyes rolled back and she went to fall and between us we managed to pull her to safety. We secured her on the floor until the police arrived and took her away. It had been less than five minutes, but it felt like hours. Once home, I reflected on the enormity of what had happened. My arms were so heavy it felt like I'd been lifting weights at the gym – but I just did what I thought was right. It's in my nature to help.

Due to data protection, the police couldn't give me her details, but they did assure me that she was safe and being cared for. To my surprise I received a letter through the post inviting me to the Lancashire Police's East Division Headquarters in Blackburn to receive a bravery award for assisting an officer. More recently I was presented with a Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society Award for voluntarily putting my own life at risk to save others.

I was humbled (and shocked!) by both awards and certainly didn't expect them. I was just helping someone, and I'd do it again in a heartbeat.





**Deborah Dobson is a Urology Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS). She started working on the Urology ward at Blackburn Royal Infirmary in 1994 and has worked as a CNS at ELHT since 2007. Deborah works within a team of five CNSs, supporting patients who experience urological cancers.**

The role and the work that myself and the team undertake can be rewarding. Despite the distress and sometimes sadness involved in elements of our work, there is job satisfaction. As a team, we endeavour to make a difference to patients and their families. It's heartwarming to receive positive feedback from them, a real boost to team moral and motivation.

My role is very varied. Every day is different because every patient I meet is different. We are always learning something new, it's fair to say every day is a school day!

Our CNS team supports urologist and oncologist clinics. These clinics are very varied – at one end of the spectrum involving 'breaking bad news', to the opposite end of the spectrum delivering good news and positive outcomes following treatment. Our team aims to assess patient's need, priorities, concerns and offer advice and support.

Our team undertake a number of nurse-led clinics, something we are very proud of. The prostate biopsy results clinic introduces patients and their families to a CNS from the time of diagnosis. Our nurse led prostate cancer follow-up clinic 're-introduces' patients to the CNS, following treatment, hopefully contributing to improved continuity along the patient pathway. Our nurse led, bladder cancer treatment clinic also provides the opportunity for regular patient assessment and support.

Thanks to continued developments in diagnostics and treatments, I now see more patients living well with and beyond cancer. It's inspirational to see patients coming back for check- ups, often years after diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

Rising to the challenge of delivering ongoing, long-term surveillance for increasing numbers of patients, ELHT Urology are embracing the introduction of Personalised Risk stratified follow-up for prostate cancer patients – a way to reduce the need for hospital visits by a more remote, personalised method of follow-up. Currently in its infancy, the vision of this follow-up model aims to include an electronic patient portal, increasing patient access and involvement.

75 years of the NHS needs to be celebrated. The NHS has been a constant in my life both personally and professionally. An amazing organisation, long may it continue.

If you are worried about any symptoms you think could be cancer, speak to a GP urgently. More useful information can be found at [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)

*"I love my job. It's such a privilege and an honour to be involved with patients and their families during what is often one of the most vulnerable and uncertain times of their lives."*



*"You had a choice to make: stay with the expectant mum and deliver her baby or run to the nearest phone box to 'call the midwife' but risk the woman giving birth alone with a toddler running around? The dilemma of a 1960s midwife – and I was still in training!"*

**Just like in the BBC TV series *Call the Midwife*, Pauline Quinn was a real-life midwife in the 60s. After an extensive career her last role was Service Manager Maternity Paediatrics and Gynaecology and Director of Midwifery based at Queen's Park Hospital before her retirement. In 2003 she was honoured with an OBE by the Queen for her services to midwifery in Lancashire.**

To this day I still fold my tea towels in the same precise way we were instructed to fold the bedding by the Matron. After all, you didn't dare argue with them – they were terrifying!

I trained as a State Registered Nurse (SRN) at Broadgreen Hospital in Liverpool in 1966 then did my midwife training over 12 months. It was very strict, and you worked hard; physically and mentally.

At the start of every shift Matron checked your uniform. High standards were always required. Clean apron, shoes polished, nails clean, no jewellery and your hair tied neatly up in a bun with your cap on top. Heaven help anyone who had a strand of hair loose!

Many women gave birth at home, so our job was to deliver the baby and then visit them twice a day for the next three days then once a day up to 10 days. Women didn't like 'to bother' the midwife by calling her out too soon. Back then most had mothers, sisters, or aunts living with them or on the same street! These strong, reliable women were experienced at knowing when baby was ready, so they didn't call the midwife until the very last minute.

No one had phones at home, so a family member or student midwife had to run to the nearest phone box to call for the midwife – so you always had to carry plenty of change! But of course, sometimes you didn't have time to call so you just delivered it yourself. I'm not even sure now if I was scared or nervous – you just did it.

Thankfully, all babies I delivered were problem-free. We were told to call for the Flying Squad if mum or baby ran into difficulty. I thought this was a helicopter or plane until I was told it meant a senior midwife and doctor coming by ambulance!

By the 70s I'd moved to East Lancashire and was a Community Midwife for the Ribble Valley, Blackburn and Hyndburn districts. I held antenatal clinics and parents crafts at Clitheroe Health Centre, attended to home births and post-birth visits.

My uniform was a royal navy-blue dress and a tweed coat which they provided. It was very posh and cost a fortune!

I remember going to see one young lady who lived on a farm. The day before she'd given birth and when I arrived that morning, she was standing in the kitchen breastfeeding the baby with one hand and baking fresh bread with the other!

Another time, I visited a house in Clitheroe and was greeted by a huge tortoise, snake, dog and toddler – and that was before I'd even seen Mum and baby! It was different, but lovely times back then. A simpler way of living.

I can't tell you how many babies I have delivered. But I never got tired of it. Seeing a mum and the family happy, and her baby healthy was wonderful. I always wanted to care for people and when I became a midwife I never not wanted to go to work. I loved my job.

If you are inspired to look for a role in midwifery, check out our vacancies at [www.elht.nhs.uk](http://www.elht.nhs.uk)





**Natalie Taylor was a stay-at-home mum to her five children, but her dream was to work in a hospital. After numerous knock-backs it was The Prince's Trust who helped put her on the road to her new career at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital.**

Before I joined The Prince's Trust programme, I was a stay-at-home mum and full-time carer to my daughter, Diamond-Rose who was born 16 weeks premature in June 2016 at Burnley General Teaching Hospital.

Diamond-Rose needed round the clock care. I'd always wanted to be a nurse but after the care, support and dedication the nurses showed us both, I more than ever wanted to work in a hospital to help and support other families and make a difference.

I applied to be a Health Care Assistant (HCA) but after numerous knock-backs I'd almost given up trying when I spotted The Prince's Trust Facebook page. I applied via them – and within 24 hours I got a phone call back!

It was right in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic so although I was excited to get started, I was also very scared when I got my placement on the ward at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital.

The course was a mixture of practical and academic learning and when I completed in August 2020, I was delighted to be offered an HCA role on bank shifts.

I gained invaluable experience working on different wards including surgical and stroke but one day a shift became available in the Emergency Department (ED) and although I was very nervous, I booked it - and they have not got rid of me since!

I now have a permanent job in ED. It's the hardest job in the world, but I absolutely love it! Being able to help my patients and make a difference to them in hard and upsetting times and being there to help in any way I can is so rewarding. Plus, my colleagues are wonderful and supportive, and always on hand to help when needed.

The Prince's Trust has given me confidence I never knew I had. I'm studying GCSE maths and English so I can train to be a nurse – something that was only ever a pipe dream until I came across that Facebook post.

If Natalie has inspired you to work in healthcare or you want to know more about The Prince's Trust can help you visit [elht.nhs.uk](http://elht.nhs.uk)

*“The Prince's Trust has changed my life more than they will ever know. They believed in me when I didn't believe in myself, encouraged me, but most of all gave me a chance.”*



*"I always wanted to be a nurse from being very small and that never waned as I grew up. I wrote to my local hospital The George Eliot in Nuneaton when I was 10 to say I was interested in being a nurse!"*

**Joanne Hartley has been a nurse for 36 years. She trained in 1987 in Warwickshire and worked in several specialities before becoming a Ward Manager, Infection Prevention and Control Specialist Nurse and Practice Educator and Assistant Matron for District Nursing – she even went to LA! Now, she is the Communication Skills Facilitator at ELHT.**

Our role is a unique position at ELHT. We are a dedicated team that facilitate communication courses within the Department of Education, Research & Innovation (DERI). As a result of this ground-breaking support by the Trust we have several successful courses available to our colleagues.

We have trained over 600 colleagues with the Sage & Thyme model for noticing low level distress and using listening skills to enable us to respond helpfully. We also offer breaking bad news, advance care planning (Mayfly) and advanced communication skills courses. They are all helping us to provide effective and compassionate care to patients, which can often be during difficult times for patients.

My passion is teaching, so this role is my ideal job. I know from feedback that we are making a difference, and this is translated into enhanced experiences by patients, relatives and colleagues in the workplace. Effective communication and keeping the patient at the centre of their journey as they access our services is our goal.

The biggest impact in my career has been COVID-19. The way the profession kept evolving with all the information that was being sent through, sometimes hourly in the beginning of the pandemic. And the way the District Nurses adapted and kept the service going throughout this challenging period was amazing.

I learn something new every day and that is the excitement about healthcare in modern times. The challenges exist and the NHS is constantly developing to meet the needs of the population which means it is always evolving.

I am really proud of my career choice, and the NHS is an amazing organisation to work for.

I have met so many lovely people in my career, and I have been privileged to be part of people's lives when they have been at their most vulnerable and will continue to be their advocate when they need me.

If you like the sound of a career with the NHS, take a look at current vacancies at [www.elht.nhs.uk](http://www.elht.nhs.uk)





*“Being a midwife is one of the oldest and most important professions in the world. Let’s remember that and be proud of it.”*

**Sheena Byrom qualified as a midwife in 1978 at Burnley General Hospital. Her knowledge, love and passion for midwifery awarded her an OBE and produced a best-selling book ‘Catching Babies’. She continues to share and inspire midwives everywhere alongside her midwife daughter Anna – and her goddaughter Jessica Acker, Burnley Birth Centre Manager and Team Leader at Lancashire Women’s and Newborn Centre.**

The best thing about being a midwife is the privileged position we’re in to serve women and families through one of the most important times of their lives. And although I don’t essentially ‘catch babies’ anymore I still support midwives through presenting, writing, podcasting and facilitating workshops.

I worked in Burnley and Blackburn all my NHS career which included nine years at Bramley Meade, a maternity home in Whalley. That was a catalytic time for me as it taught me to be a midwife in the deepest sense of the word. I was one of the UKs first consultant midwives and I ended my career as the Head of Midwifery before taking early retirement in 2010. Midwifery is now a family affair! Anna worked alongside me for a while as an infant feeding co-ordinator and it was a different experience being her manager as well as her mum! Now Anna is leading our very own organisation – All4Maternity, which aims to support and nurture midwives and students. My niece Aimee is now training to become a midwife at East Lancashire Hospitals too, and it’s wonderful to see her loving the profession!

I’ve been friends with Jess’s mum Freda since we were 17. It was already an honour being Jess’s godmother so when she told me she wanted to be a midwife I was delighted! I can’t remember now where I was when Jess broke the news, but I knew she had been harbouring the desire for a long time.

Jess trained at ELHT and qualified as a midwife in 2009. It was so special seeing her in her uniform and following in her ‘Aunty Sheena’s’ footsteps.

Jess said that the stories I used to share with her inspired her to become a midwife. But Jess has done everything herself to reach her goal – all credit goes to her!

I’m incredibly proud of her. She has achieved so much and is a well-respected midwife loved by all who meet her.

ELHT is a shining light in maternity care. It’s up there as one of the top places in the county to have a baby.

Being a midwife is who we are – it’s more than just a job. So what’s wonderful now is being able to share stories with Anna, Jess and Aimee of our mutual experience. It’s the best!



**Tom Pemberton is a laundry assistant at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital. Four years ago he was homeless and heading down the wrong path when The Prince's Trust turned his life around. He was presented with the Prince's Trust Young Achiever of the Year Award in 2021 at Buckingham Palace by King Charles III.**

When I was at school, I was a bit of a class clown. I was constantly excluded and constantly in detentions and I didn't have much going for myself. I started drinking and taking drugs and my parents didn't want me at home which left me as homeless.

I got help from a local homeless charity called Nightsafe, who told me about The Prince's Trust four-week programme, run in partnership with East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust.

I knew I had nothing to lose so gave it a shot. I worked within different departments around Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital and when they took me through the laundry, I thought it looked like something I could really get into because it was all hands-on so got my head down and got stuck in.

After the placement I was offered a job by ELHT. I enjoyed being part of a team and it gave me a feeling of self-worth – which was all thanks to The Prince's Trust.

I became a mentor for other young people joining The Prince's Trust programme and spoke at the Movement to Work Youth Summit at the Houses of Parliament in 2019. I was even commended by The High Sheriff of Lancashire for my achievement.

Then in 2021 I won The Prince's Trust Young Achiever of the Year award and invited to Buckingham Palace - to meet the future king.

I was nervous at first because it was obviously meeting royalty and the fact that the King himself presented the award is something I still can't get over!

It was a once in a lifetime experience and the framed picture I got from that day will be treasured forever.

I don't think I would be anywhere without The Prince's Trust. I'm massively proud of myself for what I have achieved and grateful for what they did for me – and of course, getting to meet the King!

If you want to know more about the Prince's Trust programme visit [princes-trust.org.uk](https://princes-trust.org.uk)

*"Meeting the King... well, it's not something you do every day!"*





*“Alfie brings endless joy to everyone he meets and enables us to reach people who otherwise we would not be able to.”*

**Alfie is ELHT’s Therapy Dog – and Head of Happiness. Based at the Spiritual Care Centre at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital he lives with Rachel Fielding, Chaplain and Therapy Dog Practitioner at ELHT. A familiar face on our corridors Alfie has become a huge part of the ELHT family – he’s even managed a royal cuddle from The Duchess of Cambridge!**

Alfie came to the Trust when he was just nine weeks old – and the following week he had met Prince William and licked him on the cheek! Not surprisingly, Alfie was a hit with the Royals and colleagues when he visited Clitheroe Community Hospital in January 2022, and it’s no mystery to see why.

Alfie brings endless joy and support to patients and colleagues and enables us to reach people who otherwise we would not be able to - he enables life-changing conversations.

Walking inside on corridors and outside for Alfie’s walks exposes him to many different situations – patients who may not engage on a ward will often make the first move to us when out and about. Walking the hospital corridors as a Chaplain is always full of encounters, but when with Alfie we are bombarded by people asking to stroke him - it’s amazing!

Alfie’s working day starts with a walk in the morning with his ‘brothers’ Yan a Border Collie, and Ted a Scottish Terrier, then he is showered to ensure he is ready for work and compliant with infection control guidelines, breakfast follows and then he has his travelling harness fitted for the short drive to work. He works three days a week visiting staff and patients across all ELHT sites.

After a chill or play with his toys in the office his working day begins. He may have a ‘Paws for Play’ time with colleagues to help them relax, may do a corridor walk with one of his amazing volunteers, or may respond to a colleague or patient request to visit because of low mood.

Alfie enables barriers to be crossed and helps to build trust with patients. It’s wonderful when you see the reaction to Alfie and see the difference he makes. It’s enriching for family too, even if they do not see the encounter. We leave a photo of Alfie and a card, so they know their loved one has had a visitor.

Alfie has a good response from patients living with dementia. One family told me how their mother, before she died, talked about ‘the doggie’. They were thrilled she had something to focus on during her final days.

Hospitals can be scary places for people. Alfie brings the outside world in to help people feel individual and less isolated.

Alfie loves coming to the hospital and working. He misses his pal, Jasper, as we all do and has started to cuddle Jasper’s toys in the office. He works so hard and is such a good boy. We are so proud of him, and I know Jasper’s influence has helped to form Alfie into the therapy dog he is becoming for everyone.

Alfie is part of #ELHTfamily thanks to funding from our hospital charity, ELHT&Me. To find out how you can support amazing initiatives like this, visit [www.elhtandme.co.uk](http://www.elhtandme.co.uk)



*"I wanted to reach out and help the Armed Forces community in any way they needed as I believe they are a community we should be supporting."*

**Fiona Lamb is the Clinical Site Manager at ELHT and since 2021 she has been the Armed Forces Veteran Lead. As a team, they help to make a difference to the lives of Veterans – something close to Fiona's heart.**

I started as a Health Care Assistant in 1996 whilst undertaking my nurse training and in 2001 worked in the Emergency Department at Burnley General Teaching Hospital before transferring to Blackburn Royal Teaching Hospital.

I've always been very proud to work as a nurse but when the role of Armed Forces Veterans Lead came available in 2020, it was one I wanted to pursue alongside my current role.

Although I never served myself, my father Harold Bradshaw was in the Royal Navy from 1942 to 1950. Dad's service played an important part of our family. He was very proud of the time he served and shared stories about World War Two and the Battle of the Atlantic.

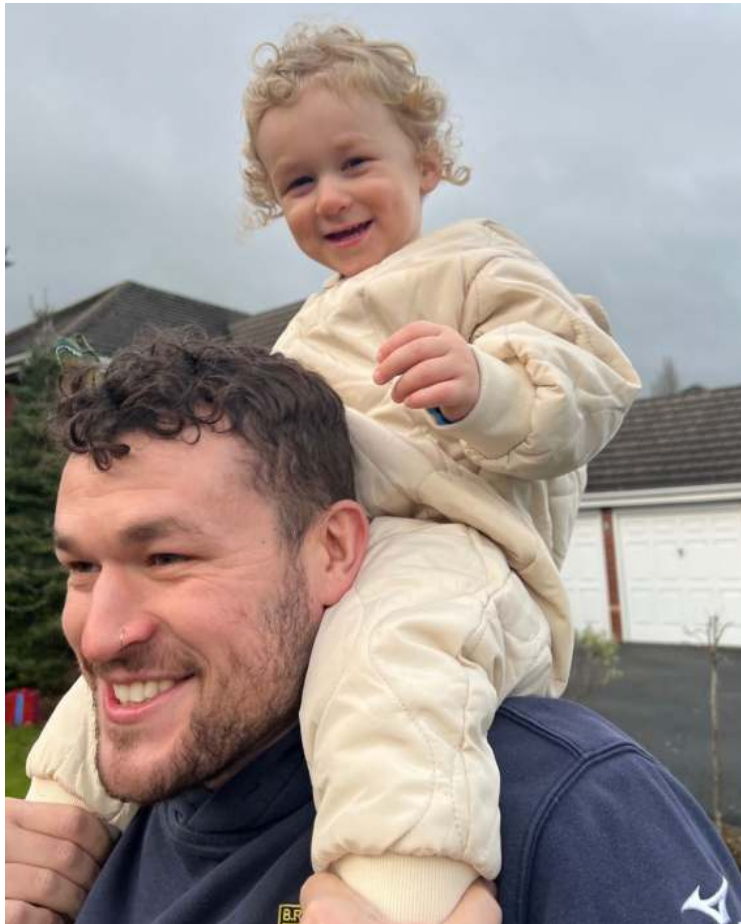
When I heard that a veteran patient who'd been receiving treatment at ELHT had sadly taken their own life, I wanted to look at the provisions and care available to the Armed Forces community.

In my first year I saw 202 veteran patients. We offer individualised support to each veteran and their family and our Trust has one of the highest number of patient veterans seen face-to-face and given a post in the NHS or community. To date myself and my colleague Shafiq Sadiq, a full-time Armed Forces Veterans Advocate, have seen over 1,180 patients.

The support we offer is wide-ranging and includes anything from organising accommodation for homeless veterans and expediting discharges from wards through to making referrals to Op Courage and the Veterans Trauma Network for those veterans who have found themselves in difficult positions.

We are continually developing the service and feel the journey is just starting.





**Ed Sinclair is a Charge Nurse on D1, a diabetes and haematology specialist ward at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital. He has worked for the Trust since 2016, but when his son Kit had bilateral grommet surgery in January 2022, he was faced with a more personal experience of the Trust.**

Me and my wife Lauren had some concerns with Kit's communication at around 18 months. He'd been on and off with various viruses since being a baby, his speech was poorly pronounced and he often failed to react to noises.

Our Health Visitor referred us for a hearing test and Kit was diagnosed with having glue ear with mild hearing loss in both his ears.

Glue ear is a 'watch and wait condition' meaning it can often heal itself. However, Lauren and I wanted Kit to have the bilateral grommet surgery required to relieve the symptoms. This involved tiny tubes inserted into the eardrum which stay in place for six to 12 months then fall out naturally.

After various referrals Kit had the operation in January 2022 at Blackburn. This was much quicker than anticipated as we were aware of waiting times in different parts of the country being significantly higher (sometimes years).

The Trust is fantastic on an individual clinical basis so never once were Lauren or I worried about the procedure. Every one of my colleagues genuinely does the best they can for their patients so I knew Kit would receive the best care possible and in the safest of hands.

Kit massively caught up in the months following his procedure speech wise, but we had a few other concerns and thanks to more tests at ELHT we found out he needed glasses due to poor eyesight and a stigmatism in his left eye.

Since then, Kit's eyesight and hearing has improved and he is like a different child. He is a chatty and cheeky three-year-old who loves dinosaurs, sharks and monster trucks.

I am very proud to work for ELHT and the NHS because I believe everyone should be entitled to free, safe healthcare. Being a small cog in a big wheel which supports so many people is something to be proud of.

I fell into nursing as I didn't know what to study at university and having science A Levels my dad encouraged me to look at a vocational subject that I would definitely have employment with after graduating – and I'm glad I did!

*"The care Kit received from my colleagues at ELHT was second to none and everything was explained thoroughly to us at every interval."*



*"I have always been a people person and love chatting and helping, so being a receptionist is the perfect role for me. My school reports said: 'Lynn talks too much', and when one of my old teachers visited the hospital they smiled and said: 'perfect role for you, this!'"*

**Lynn Hackett is one of the most familiar faces at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital. A Voluntary Service/Reception Manager for ELHT her smiling face and cheery manner has been welcoming patients and visitors since 2000.**

It was never my plan to work for the NHS. I worked in the travel industry but after having my daughter I needed to look at what was best for myself and my young family so a change in career it was, and an evening Receptionist job became available at Queen's Park Hospital Main Reception.

Back then, patients were transported from Blackburn Royal Infirmary to Queen's Park Hospital via ambulance transport. Staff were also ferried up and down between hospital sites in minibuses driven by Trevor and Joe, our wonderfully cheerful drivers.

Reception wasn't as busy as it is today. You had time to chat and listen to people who were visiting their poorly relatives and just needed to offload before they left.

One of my favourite things was when the Maternity Support Workers with the new parents brought babies down to see us before they went home. As we chatted to the new mums I'd like to think we had a little input into their name! I became really good friends with one of the support workers and became godmother to one of her daughters.

I remember one time a gentleman brought his heavily pregnant wife in and I quickly grabbed a wheelchair. I helped them to the lift towards Maternity but the little one wasn't for waiting and out he came in the lift - caught by me! He was a beautiful baby boy, and as the lift doors opened, I was helped by Renee Alan, the Sister on the D Wards with Midwives running down the corridor from the delivery suite!

Another time, a taxi driver came running in saying that his passenger had got in the car but couldn't get out and could I help? I ran out to the car and the lady inside was showing signs of a stroke so, without hesitation, I jumped in next to her and held her hand while directing the driver to the Emergency Department. A few days later the relatives came to Reception to thank me. They said without my quick thinking she wouldn't have made it.

It's always a pleasure seeing patients discharged and going home well and full recovered – that's a sight I'll never stop loving.

In 2006 we moved to the state-of-the-art reception at the newly established Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital. With the new Reception came volunteers and many of them are still with us today and are a valuable part of the Trust.

One of the things I love the most about working on Reception is the fact that we are the first point of contact for anyone arriving at the hospital. Telling a chemo patient, you see repeatedly, how amazing they look wearing their colourful head scarfs, jumping up from behind reception to hand someone a tissue when they are telling you something and the emotions become too much or giving them a well-needed hug is all part and parcel of the job. I hope we bring them some comfort and not forgetting the tears of joy when those colourful headscarf's come off and new hair arrives.

Over the years I have met so many wonderful people it's been an absolute joy.

Working for the NHS may never have been on my 'to do' list but it's been one the most rewarding careers I could have wished for. We are all part of a huge machine and being the first point of contact for anyone coming to our Trust is a privilege.





**John Nelson is a Senior Buyer for the NHS across Lancashire and South Cumbria. When a routine eye appointment alerted 'a problem' he suddenly switched from being a colleague of the NHS to a patient. He underwent neurosurgery and received care and support from ELHT Occupational Support and Therapy Team to help aid his recovery.**

A routine eye appointment in 2008 changed my life.

Happy and healthy (or so I thought) I was referred to a Specialist who discovered that the nerves anchoring my eye with my head were weakening and breaking.

I had botox injections for nine years that acted as elastic but even then I would still see my eye droop daily and it would flick 1,000 times a day - so fast that no one could see it except myself and the Specialists. It would not switch off and in 2015/16 I was offered neurosurgery to repair the broken hemi facial spasms.

After consideration, advice and risk discussions I put my life in my surgeon's hands. If we can put man on the moon, we can return from this one, I thought.

The surgery went well but there was a brain fluid leak so additional brain surgery was undertaken less than a week later.

Three weeks later I was discharged home when my brain started to feel like a volcano and I felt unwell. My wife took me back to hospital and it configured that a small strain of meningitis had embedded itself in my brain between surgeries and I spent several weeks in hospital getting it out with drugs and extractions.

Once home, while my wife went to work and my son was at university, I slept for England. It was a difficult period. My brain had taken a battering, but my mental trauma was just beginning again as on top of everything I'd been through I faced fresh personal tragedies. My mother-in-law died after a stroke and my own mother's health started to decline and she died when I turned 50. My neurosurgeon told me that if this had happened a year before, my brain would not have coped and I would be dead.

I then put my faith in the hands of some brilliant people at ELHT Occupational Support Team and Therapy who really helped me and aid my recovery.

Once they learnt of the problem, I was immediately sent home and support was put in place. They took a huge amount of pressure off me by being the ones to inform my line manager and anyone else who needed to know of my absence. They then arranged a course of counselling which was pivotal in my recovery.

This was the NHS working, listening and it enabled me to get into a better place and thankfully I am back at work and living life to the best I can, all thanks to the NHS.

*"I have nothing but praise for the NHS, as an employee, and for the care I have received, it has done nothing but its best for me."*



*“Working at ELHT has been the best career choice I could have made. Working alongside great people and many teams, positively influencing health outcomes, really has been the best.”*

**Sue Henry has worked for the NHS for 37 years. She was the Baby Friendly Lead for the Trust for 20 years and instrumental in helping ELHT become the first Trust in the country to receive the prestigious Baby Friendly Initiative ‘Gold’ standard from the United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef) UK. In 2019 she was presented with the Chief Midwifery Gold Award and a British Empire Medal in 2022 for her services to midwifery and baby friendly care.**

I trained as a staff nurse at Blackburn Royal Infirmary in 1986. I worked on the medical cardiology ward and although I loved my job, I was seeing a lot of poorly patients. I’d always had midwifery in the back of my mind and this was making me think more about health and prevention and how everything happens from birth.

Before I knew it, the joyous side of midwifery had pulled me in!

My heart had always been in public health and preventative work and when I became a mother myself the importance of breastfeeding really struck a chord with me, so when the opportunity came up to move into the Baby Friendly Team it was perfect.

The Baby Friendly Initiative is a global programme which aims to transform healthcare for babies, their mothers and families as part of a wider global partnership between UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO).

At ELHT our team works with public services to ensure that all mothers and babies are supported with feeding and developing a close and loving relationship – whatever their choice of feeding method.

We believe breastfeeding matters for many reasons, and together, future public health depends on more babies receiving more breastmilk. The team works with colleagues across our ELHT service and beyond, and thanks to education, innovation and progression we have seen breastfeeding rates climb – something we are exceptionally proud of.

I have a great passion about the people of ELHT and feel incredibly proud to be retiring in the NHS’ 75th year.







**Gina Holt is an Administration Officer for the Burnley West District Nurse Team. She has worked for the Trust for six years and her previous role was a receptionist at main outpatients.**

My role involves taking phone calls from patients and the relatives of housebound patients who need a visit from the District Nurse for treatment for a new or existing condition. They also care for patients nearing the end of life.

We receive distressing phone calls from patients in pain and agitated, but that's part of the job and our priority is to get a District Nurse out to them asap.

This job makes you question your own mortality and put things into perspective. It makes you appreciate things more and I don't sweat the small stuff anymore!

District Nurses are an essential service and it's always lovely to receive a thank you call from one of the relatives.

My role isn't patient-facing, but I still build up a bond and good relationships with patients because of talking to them frequently on the phone. There was one lady who needed lots of support in her last few years of life, so I had lots of lovely chats with her. I was invited to her funeral and got to meet her family which was lovely, especially when they told me that they'd heard good things about me.

I'm also the wellbeing officer for the team and make sure I'm always there for the nurses - I feel like their mum! They are all so busy so I'm constantly checking in with them to make sure they are OK! I was nominated for Non-Clinical Worker of the Year at last year's staff awards after my team described me as "the absolute glue that keeps the team together". That was wonderful to hear.

I love my job. I love being able to help people and love working with the District Nurses. We are like one big family.

*"Working in the community is like a family. Everyone seems to know one another, and everyone looks out for one another. Even when things feel challenged the District Nursing teams still go out their way for the community."*



**Shafiq Sadiq is the Armed Forces Veteran Advocate Support Officer for East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust. Previously, he served for 22 years in the Royal Army Dental Corps as a Medical Practice Manager but now supports veterans who come to ELHT as an inpatient as well as recruiting them to work for the Trust.**

During my time in service, I trained as a medic and a clerk. The army was very good in training people to undertake dual roles so as well as being a Practice Manager I was also qualified as a Medic, a Dental Nurse and in a more combat role I was Chemical, Biological, Radiological & Nuclear Warfare Instructor.

I was based in many places and was deployed on operational tours to Bosnia, Sierra Leone and Iraq.

My plan was always to get a job as a Practice Manager in the NHS when I left the army however, my wife was still serving so I spent a further 10 years as the spouse of a serving soldier until we bought a house and settled in East Lancashire in 2019 and I started work with the Intensive Home Support Service at ELHT, a community-based team who provide acute medical care in patients' homes.

This led to my current role supporting veterans who come to any of the five East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust (ELHT) sites as an inpatient. I work alongside the nurses and doctors providing veterans with any additional support they need, such as financial, housing and so on. I'm also responsible for recruiting veterans to come and work at ELHT. I know first-hand how daunting it can be for veterans to get a job outside the military, but we help to highlight their worth and the transferable skills they have to prove there are possibilities elsewhere.

Since starting this role in April 2022 Fiona Lamb, the Armed Forces Lead, and myself have seen and supported over 1,300 veterans who have been patients at the Trust.

Most veterans aren't aware of the services and opportunities ELHT offers so it's crucial we spread the word. The jobs on offer are clinical and non-clinical and include engineering, administration, electrician, maintenance, communications, ward clerk and medical – the list is endless!

When veterans come to ELHT as a patient or member of staff it helps enormously knowing there are other ex-servicemen, like myself, who work here. It gives them reassurance and someone they can relate to.

At ELHT we are proud to support ex-servicemen and women and welcome them with open arms to join the team.

*"Due to the institutionalised nature of the military many veterans find the transition into civilian life difficult. It's our job to help change that."*





**Priscilla Manuel is a Matron at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital. She was one of 14 Staff Nurses who came from India in May 2001 to work at Queen's Park Hospital in Blackburn when she was 22 years old.**

The flight Bangalore to Manchester was full of nurses travelling to the North West for work. A few friends and I decided to apply to come to the UK to work but on arrival they got posted to Manchester and Preston, and I was the only one who got East Lancashire.

I suppose I was a little daunted, but I was young and excited to have ventured away from home so took it all in my stride.

I settled in very well and although I spoke English it was very different to the Lancashire twang! However, I soon picked up the local jargon.

The support I received was incredible. Initially, I was appointed to C4, the Gastro Ward and the Matron came to meet us at the airport. In fact, that same level of support continues today within ELHT – that's one of the reasons I have stayed.

We became like family and again that's something that still stands today.

ELHT is a close-knit community. It's full of lovely people who look out for each other. Everybody always asks if you are alright, and you are never short of a hug! I lost my mum and friend last year and the support was incredible, especially from my manager Joanne Gardiner – I would clone her if I could!

ELHT is a leading organisation that continues to develop and share its learning. The Trust is here to serve its community but it's also about building an effective and diverse workforce so that level of care and service can continue to be delivered. We also have a co-ordinated approach to patient care and experience and that's something I love.

The holistic and personal care approach the NHS is guided by is second to none. It's the only place a nurse means a nurse, and that's something I'll always be grateful for.

I'd recommend an overseas worker to come and work here. Coming to ELHT was the best decision I made.

*"I'm proud to be a nurse – I wouldn't do anything different."*



**Jake Houghton was diagnosed with quadriplegic spastic cerebral palsy after being born three months premature in March 1996, weighing 2lbs 5oz. His twin brother was stillborn and after a tense, heart-breaking time, his mum Rachel recalls how the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the former Queen's Park Hospital in Blackburn became the start of their family's NHS journey.**

Jake's development was delayed. He missed milestones such as sitting and rolling over and it was then that the Paediatrics Team diagnosed him with quadriplegic spastic cerebral palsy.

What followed was a snowball of diagnosis and we were allocated specialists and therapists from dieticians to speech and language and physio.

Jake can't stand or walk and because of fine motor issues he is unable to attend to his own personal care such as bathing and feeding so I am his main caregiver.

However, we receive constant support from a whole gamete of NHS services which we rely on daily and would be lost without.

The Occupational Therapy Team at Clitheroe provides all Jake's equipment such as bath chairs, bed and mattress and we see them every six to 12 months. But most importantly, they are always at the end of a phone if we need them.

The same applies with the District Nurses. Due to good home management, myself and his dad Martin carry out all Jake's physical and personal care but we know the nurses will be available the minute we need them.

Jake is a fun-loving bloke with a wicked sense of humour.

A strong reader from a young age, he lives for books, and reading and writing are his passion. Some of his articles have featured in local magazines and he is currently writing a book about the Lancashire Witch Trails.

He's very smart and retains all manner of facts and knowledge that we call him the Human Alexa!

Our long and involved relationship with the NHS has enabled us to meet some fabulous people who have helped and supported Jake and our family for years. From bereavement counselling, therapists, doctors, nurses, neonatal nurses, consultants and surgeons... the list is endless!

We have always been ever so grateful for all their interactions no matter how big or small it's been.

*"We have received so much from the NHS over the past 27 years!"*





*“The journey of a patient in hospital can be difficult and at times traumatic. The satisfaction I get from seeing a patient’s mood being lifted is what I love most about the job.”*

**Fazal Hassan is the Muslim chaplain and Imam for ELHT. Based at the Spiritual Care Centre at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital his role offers patients and colleagues spiritual, religious and pastoral services as well as emotional and psychological support. Fazal has been a comforting and invaluable presence in the hospital since 1994.**

Through one-to-one and collective prayers, spiritual advice and counselling I offer support to patients and colleagues. I also provide end of life care and bereavement support for patients and their families.

I want to reach out to patients and serve them in a way that brings hope, strength, confidence and acceptance of their illness as well as encouragement to cope.

The pandemic was a very challenging time. I was dealing mainly with patients who had little hope for survival while others faced anxiety and psychological trauma. Often alone without any family members, supporting end-of-life patients was difficult. I also often worked outside the hospital setting in the community helping and supporting families whose loved one was in hospital.

I don’t expect any acknowledgment or recognition for what I do but it was very special being awarded Employee of the Month in October 2020 – especially because it was a patient who had nominated me.

The patient was impressed that I had invested a lot of my time to sit and listen to his concerns, follow up on his condition with the clinical team, give him the added assurances and advise the staff on how to deal with certain things. I advised and encouraged the patient on how he could still physically continue to offer his prayers despite his medical condition.

The award gave meaning to what we all do in the team – not just me – and showed what we are about and gave us a sense of encouragement to continue what we are doing as chaplains.

I believe as a hospital chaplain to be allowed in a person's life and develop a spiritual encounter and connection through our human spirit and spiritual intervention is a real privilege.

I’m very proud to be part of ELHT and work for NHS. I believe this is a blessing from God and a platform granted to me to be able to assist the vulnerable, visit the sick, support the needy and be able to make real life changes to people’s health conditions.



**Claire Hey is an Assistant Matron in the Emergency Department at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital – one of the busiest in the North West. Starting her working life as a care assistant in a care home, her mum and sisters are nurses too, so clearly it's always been in her blood!**

I have worked at ELHT for 23 years now and I have seen a lot of changes - so you could say I am a veteran!

I've only been an Assistant Matron since January so I am still finding my feet to see where I can make a difference and hopefully lead by example.

I have always enjoyed helping people since I worked with my mum in a care home after school. I loved sitting with the residents chatting to them and doing their nails etc. Just spending that time with them made their day brighter which I thought was really special.

When my mum qualified as a nurse, she encouraged me to apply for a job at the hospital as a Health Care Assistant. I was then seconded to do my nurse training in 2010 as one of the last groups to be able to qualify as part of a secondment. During my training I completed placements in various community and hospital settings, including A&E.

The thing that gets me out of bed every day is making improvements to enable us to provide the best care possible for our patients. A particular example of this and one I am most proud of is ambulance handover times. Ambulance crews could often be waiting for up to four hours with a patient but now it is an average of eight minutes meaning the crews can be released sooner to help more people in need.

It can be challenging working in ED as it's busy and we see very sick people but it's also extremely rewarding.

My mum now works as a Junior Sister and I also two sisters who are nurses, so ELHT literally is family for me!

*"I have always liked a faster-paced work environment so the adrenalin of working in emergency care suits me to a tee."*





**Margaret Wilson trained as a Staff Nurse at Blackburn Royal Infirmary in 1948 when the NHS was established. She was Community Midwife and then Nursing Officer for Community Midwives until her retirement in 1996. In July 1981 she represented England and Lancashire Midwives at Her Majesty's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.**

Our day started at 7.30am. We wore our 'dirty' apron from the previous day and set about cleaning bedpans and changing beds by 9am. We then had a quick cup of tea, changed our apron and headed out for rounds. We worked nine hours a day, six days a week. Once a week we headed to the classroom in the hospital for a one-hour lecture.

When the NHS founded there was a general excitement about it, but I don't remember any big grand opening!

The immediate change was the introduction of management. Previously, Matron was the boss. She did everything in the hospital and anything you needed you went to her. The NHS introduced structure and a fairer working environment.

Once qualified I worked in theatre, but I wanted more patient contact so did Midwifery training at Townley's Hospital in Bolton then lived with a Midwife (and her parents) to learn the job.

Expectant mums could have their baby in hospital or maternity homes, but many chose a home birth. They were given a list of what they needed to prepare, such as newspaper for the floor and a box which contained the Midwives' telephone numbers (clinic and home), 'tuppence' (two pennies) to call the midwife, pads and sheets.

Once qualified you visited each house by yourself. GPs left everything to the midwives and you only called for assistance if there was an issue – something I never had to do.

One of the first houses I visited the husband left me and his wife alone and I was horrified because the phone box was a quarter of a mile away so I would have struggled if there had been any complications. Thankfully there wasn't and I delivered her daughter, Julia, safely.

Another time I delivered a baby boy and when I went to deliver the placenta, I delivered another baby instead - the woman had been misdiagnosed and was carrying twin boys! We didn't have scans so if babies were lying back-to-back it was hard to diagnose more than one. Apart from the shock, mother and babies were fine.

I can't even begin to count how many babies I delivered but I loved every single one and would do it all again tomorrow if I could!



*"It's like magic watching a baby being delivered, and that feeling never left me."*



**Sheeba Philip has worked at ELHT for seven years and a total of 21 years for the NHS. Previously the Lead Stroke Specialist Nurse at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals, she was the first ever appointed Nurse Consultant at ELHT and is currently the Stroke Nurse Consultant at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital.**

Stroke in itself is a traumatic experience for the patient and their family because it occurs suddenly and sometimes without a warning. The effects of a stroke are often permanent and life-altering so knowing that I can make a difference in improving the patient's situation is incredibly fulfilling.

My main clinical role involves reviewing new admissions in the Emergency Department (ED) when they present with stroke-like symptoms. I assess patients and provide an expert opinion, initiate treatment plans and arrange appropriate investigations around the diagnosis of stroke. This includes the timely treatment with thrombolysis, and referrals for thrombectomy and neurosurgery as needed. My role also entails developing pathways and influencing strategy and policies to ensure excellence in clinical areas for patients accessing the stroke services.

The leadership and culture of ELHT are its greatest strengths. It has a non-blame culture that learns from instances when things go wrong and a leadership that is very encouraging of employees. It always encourages staff to improve and provides the support and guidance needed for improvement. Patient safety is always the focal point of everything done.

I would certainly encourage people to get into this profession. Nursing is a very challenging profession but also very rewarding. It's a job without borders and the scope of practice is wide and progressing. The opportunity to learn new skills and progress in career is very high. As for me it also keeps me humble and to be thankful to the Lord for all the things in our life.

*"Knowing that I am making a difference in my patients' lives is the most rewarding aspect of my profession and the thing that keeps me going every day."*





*"My waters went when I was teaching yoga at 41+3 weeks."*

**Tessa Clemson gave birth to her daughter Frances Estie Everett at Blackburn Birth Centre in March 2020. Tessa, who is the owner of Tessa Clemson Yoga studio in Great Harwood opted for a water birth and now at 40 weeks pregnant with her second baby, is hoping to return to the centre for the birth of her son.**

I used to teach pregnancy yoga classes at Blackburn Birth Centre so was familiar with the beautiful space. I knew lots of the staff and what I teach in my sessions is very aligned with their practices and way of thinking.

I believe all births can be positive, but I knew if I could I wanted to be active and in the water to birth my baby - something Blackburn Birth Centre encourages and promotes. It has a beautiful atmosphere and calming nature and because I already knew all the midwives it was the obvious choice when I fell pregnant.

The centre has four rooms for comfort and privacy. Two of the rooms have a double bed and three of the four rooms have a big birth pool. From the beginning of my pregnancy my midwives listened to my wishes and supported me in all of my choices.

My waters went when I was teaching yoga at 41+3 weeks. My contractions progressed and my partner Lucas drove us to the centre. My amazing midwife Vicky welcomed me at the front door and as she put her arms around me and led me to my room I instantly felt relieved and safe.

Lots of my sensations were in my back and I wasn't getting much of a break between each contraction. Vicky was nothing but calm and patient, constantly reassuring me and encouraging me to follow my instincts and move around as much as I needed to.

As my baby moved into a better position, things started to happen quickly, so I jumped into the pool. Vicky and Lucas continued to be amazing, attentive and gentle but always there when I needed them.

Just one hour later Frances floated into the world in the most magical and peaceful way – she didn't even cry! My second midwife Mo said it was because she wouldn't have realised she had been born.

Blackburn Birth Centre and its fabulous staff allowed me to have the birth I had envisioned. I can't thank everyone enough – especially Vicky, Mo and my midwife throughout both pregnancies, Katriona. I feel proud that we have facilities locally like Blackburn Birth Centre, we had such a positive experience.



*"The team in Theatres is like an extended family. We have so many fabulous people working at ELHT who I am fortunate to work with on a daily basis."*

**Nicola Tingle has worked for the NHS since 1990. Starting as an Auxiliary Nurse at Clitheroe Hospital she trained as a nurse in Liverpool before working in general theatres at the former Blackburn Royal Infirmary as a scrub nurse. Since 2018 she has been the Team Manager/Senior Sister for Theatres at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital.**

Since primary school I had always wanted to be a nurse. I trained at Liverpool and had the invaluable experience of working my placements at well-established institutes such as Whiston Hospital, Broadgreen Hospital, Royal Liverpool (which was brand new at the time) and Alder Hey Children's Hospital.

Once qualified in 1997 I came to work in general theatres at the then Blackburn Royal Infirmary. I wanted to work for my local trust. It was important for me to be able to see first-hand what the Trust had to offer in case any of my family or friends needed treatment.

Back then, we had three general theatres and ran one emergency theatre every afternoon during the week – how things have changed over the years!

Not only did I experience the move from the Infirmary to the new Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital, now we have one dedicated theatre emergency list which runs 24 hours, seven days a week and share emergencies with other theatres if they have a case cancelled.

We have so many fantastic theatre staff and clinicians here at ELHT that I couldn't imagine ever working anywhere else that could come close. I love my team and my manager is very supportive.

Theatre is specialised and takes a certain type of person to work in it. We are lucky to have such a diverse range of colleagues working together which means our patients are very well cared for by a wonderful team.

At ELHT everybody looks out for each other and if there is an emergency everybody gets involved and helps out. You're never alone and we truly are a family.







**Dan Hallen is the Chief Information Officer at ELHT. He was inspired to work for the Trust after undergoing open-heart surgery in 2013 and wanting to give something back. He won a competition to go to Westminster Abbey for the NHS' 70th birthday and is immensely proud of the organisation which is 'in his blood'.**

The morning after my eight-hour open-heart operation the Cardio Surgeon came to my bedside in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). It was his day off and he had driven in specially to check on me.

Emotions overtook me and I could only croak "thank you" through my oxygen mask as he said the reason he did his job was to give people a life.

Our NHS takes care of people when they're most in need, when they need support and when the natural feeling of wanting help can't be done alone.

I've always had a personal connection with the NHS. My mother, godmother and nan were all nurses and worked in Cheetham Hill, Prestwich, Winchester and Salford. I would hear stories from my nan and my mum and I remember going to Crumpsall Hospital when I was 10 year -old as she was finishing nights!

But since my heart conditions and the bits of surgery I've had the NHS has become part of my blood and I'll always be grateful.

From a young age, technology had always fascinated me, and it was inevitable that I would have a lifelong involvement with tech in some form. The NHS uses the broadest spectrum of technology in any industry, and what better place to bring technology and people together?

ELHT is a huge employer, and most of our hospitals are essentially small towns. Whatever we do, we always pull together, do the right thing and I sleep at night knowing that we've helped someone when they've most needed it.

The NHS has been around for the same amount of time as the life expectancy in East Lancashire. It's changed over the years, but the pride, ambition and dedication are there in bucketloads.

I'm extremely proud to work for this great organisation which gives people – and myself – life.

*"I am deeply grateful to the clinician and surrounding workforce who saved my life. What other organisation or group of people can claim to give people a life?"*



## Abbie Culshaw is a Trainee Orthopaedic Plaster Technician at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital's Fracture Clinic. When's she not providing patient care and treatment she swaps the clinic for the rink representing Team GB squad at ice hockey!

My role at ELHT and that as an ice hockey player have some similarities and each helps the other. They both involve working in a team environment, require motivation and determination to succeed and communication is a key factor – there is no “I” in team and we are all in it together. Thankfully, my role at ELHT is less slippery and doesn’t involve skates!

I apply and remove plaster casts, braces and assist the orthopaedic consultants in providing patient care and treatment. I love how every day is different. Each patient brings a different set of problems to solve, and I love providing patient centred care and helping to empower them with knowledge to aid in their recovery.

My determination to succeed and my love of ice hockey helps keep me motivated both on the rink and in clinic and it is a great form of stress relief. I was 14 when I first represented GB at under 18s Junior Women level and after I turned 18, I joined the GB women squad. I currently captain my women’s club team in Whitley Bay where we have just been crowned undefeated league champions and I play for Bradford in the men’s league.

I see a lot of sports related injuries so I have learnt a lot about the bones, muscles and loads more in the body which helps as a competing sportsperson.

My colleagues are amazing and so supportive both on and off the ice! I represented GB in the World Championships in 2018, 2019 and 2022 where we won a gold medal! Whenever the games are on TV my colleagues tune in – some even travelled to Nottingham to watch me at the Olympic qualifiers in 2021.

I feel lucky and honoured to be doing both a job and sport I love.



*“Ice hockey is a fast sport, which involves working as a team and having the ability to make quick decisions are assets I’ve been able to apply to my role in ELHT’s Fracture Clinic.”*





**As a young girl Sharon Credland used to help her granny who volunteered in the tea shop at Burnley Teaching Hospital – and 44 years later she is there working as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Dermatology.**

After school I used to come to the hospital to help my granny restock and tidy up in the tearoom. My dad would pick me up after dropping off my mum who was an evening domestic on the Edith Watson Maternity Unit. My auntie also worked in the state-of-the-art ECG/Cardiology Department as a trainee technician, so it was no surprise that I started my nurse training at the same hospital in July 1988!

I look after patients with long term skin disease who are on medication. It's so rewarding to see positive outcomes for patients living with long term skin conditions following the right treatment at the right time alongside education. A few of the current patients I used to look after when they were children and now come with their children which is wonderful to see but makes me feel long in the tooth!

The advent of biologic treatments in recent years has been a life changer for patients who are eligible for them. For years all psoriasis patients had access to were creams and a small selection of systemic drugs but now we have the ability to prescribe biologic treatments which can transform their lives, in fact most patients do say they have been life changers. It's so rewarding to see them not having to think about their skin on a daily basis. And even more recently we have been able to prescribe biologics for our eczema patients to make their quality of life so much better.

I enjoy my work; every day I try and learn something new. I also like supporting other colleagues and sharing the knowledge and skills I have learnt over the years. My colleagues are like a work family and are a fabulous bunch of people who make me smile each day.

*"It's rewarding to see positive outcomes for patients living with long term skin conditions following the right treatment at the right time alongside education."*



**William Price is the Dermatology Clinical Pharmacist for ELHT. He works directly within dermatology at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital and Burnley General Hospital and was responsible for establishing the dermatology pharmacist role at ELHT.**

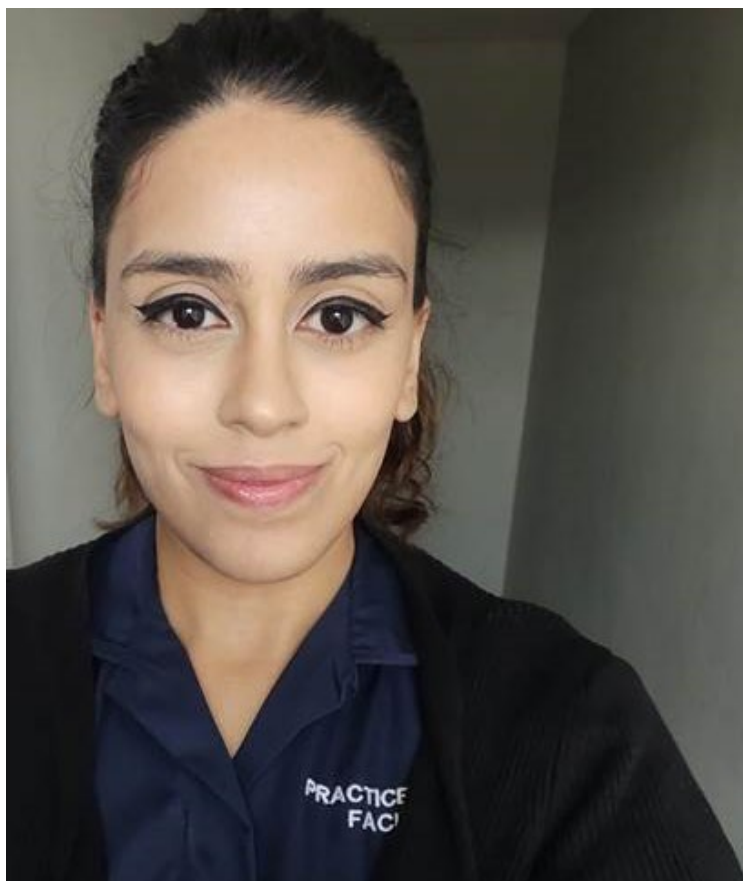
I work closely with medical and nursing colleagues within dermatology to optimise medicines usage and to try and improve the availability of medicines within the department. This includes analysing reports on our medicines usage, making sure we are using the most cost-effective options, looking into stock issues as well as adding and removing medicines to our locally approved medicines lists in response to clinical developments and market changes.

I also work directly with patients as a prescriber. I see patients with follicular disorders – this is primarily acne, but recently I've also started seeing patients with a painful condition known as hidradenitis suppurativa. These are patients coming to dermatology for the first time or patients who have already been on a treatment with our team and require ongoing monitoring.

Being directly involved in patient care helps me get a grounded perspective when working with colleagues to improve our prescribing. For example, creating prescribing checklists for patients on our most intense medications in order to be consistent as a department. This allows us to work to the Trust's goal of providing safe, personal and effective care.

I am proud to work for ELHT and feel grateful it has invested in my professional development journey. The dermatology and pharmacy teams are forward thinking and support me to carry out training and development to make me better at my job which in return makes for a happier and more interesting place to work.

*"Working with patients in dermatology is rewarding because the impact of treatment is visible and has a tremendous benefit on their mental wellbeing as well as their skin."*



**Asma Issa is the Practice Education Facilitator (PEF) for midwifery and medical students at ELHT. A trained Midwife, she is also the Freedom to Speak Up Champion at ELHT because she believes everyone should be treated fairly with respect regardless of their gender, colour, religion or any other characteristics.**

Being a midwife isn't just "playing with babies". It's about supporting and advocating for women, helping them make informed choices of their birth rights and supporting their transition from being a woman to becoming a mother. I mean...why would I choose any other job role?

Helping families welcome a newborn into their family and equally supporting students to understand that feeling is what I love the most about my job.

I became a Freedom to Speak Up Champion as being from an ethnic minority background, I was witness to inequalities within people with protected characteristics. Colleagues had come to me in confidence about racist comments being made so I escalated this to the Trust's Executive Team who were very inspired by how I was able to speak up and be confident that a change is required. Being a speak up champion enables me to better support colleagues and patients where required.

I believe people don't intend to be discriminatory and there can be many contributing factors to racism/discrimination, therefore being a champion allows me to educate people on how to cultivate a better understanding and a kinder nature towards all.

I'm helping bring in change by working with the Executive Team to create a new framework which is inclusive of all.

It's truly humbling to be involved in this transformative change. I take great pride in being part of creating and contributing to a more inclusive environment for everyone – colleagues, patients, relatives, volunteers and visitors. It truly is such a wonderful experience.

I am proud to work for the NHS - I mean it's one of our unique organisations in the UK and I'm glad to be a part of it.

*"I love being an integral part of ELHT, where inclusion is valued. The most special aspect of my job is being able to work with so many amazing people and being part of such a diverse workforce".*





*"The development of technology over the years has greatly improved patient care and allows for a safer, quicker and more effective treatment and diagnosis of patients."*

**Martin Cottam is the Trust's Clinical Engineering Operations Manager and Medical Device Safety Officer. His NHS career started in 1985 as a 16-year-old Apprentice Electrician at the former Queen's Park Hospital which later led him to becoming a Medical Technical Officer in the newly developing field of Electronics and Biomedical Engineering (EBME).**

The main function of clinical engineering is to look after the life cycle of medical devices such as anaesthetic machines, ventilators, defibrillators, infusion devices on all the Trust's sites – around 15,000 in total.

One thing I can say which has changed over the decades is the technology of medical devices. Not just the number of devices that are used today but the science and technology that has increased exponentially through the decades.

One example is the infusion device, a small machine that infuses prescribed drugs or fluids into a patient. At the start of my career the Trust had around 12, mainly based in neonatal intensive care and maternity, and now we look after 1,400! In fact, one of the earliest infusion devices that I worked on was clockwork and had to be wound up mechanically before each use.

Back in 1981 I was admitted to hospital after becoming seriously ill and saw pieces of medical equipment that looked like something out of Star Trek! I was given a CT scan with the only CT scanner in the North West and loving science at school I wondered what it would be like to work on this sort of technology. Little did I know at the time that this would shape my career years later.

The NHS has been there over the years for my family with lifesaving treatment and care on several occasions. This has allowed me to have a career that I am passionate about. I have met friends and colleagues through the Trust, and now both my children have established careers within the NHS.

As it celebrates 75 years there truly is a lot to be thankful for.



*"One of the best things about my job is that you never know who is coming through the door and who you may meet. Sometimes we only see the patient for less than five minutes, but they can have a really big impact on your day."*

**Tehseen Ganchi is a Diagnostic Radiographer and works in the x-ray department. She started at the Trust as a ward volunteer before moving into patient services where she worked for three years while studying her degree.**

The role of a radiographer is to use different methods of imaging to look inside a patient to see what is causing their illness or injury. We work in a range of departments and we get requests for x-rays from multiple places such as GPs, A&E and clinics within the hospital itself.

Most of the time it may take a team of radiographers to work together to take one person's x-ray. In a day you can be involved in more than 50 patients' care!

A typical day starts by cleaning and testing the equipment to make sure patients are kept safe. We bring patients in one by one and position them for the x-rays. We check if we are giving them a good dose of radiation suitable for what we are x-raying, as we are responsible for any radiation that we give. After the x-ray we check that the image is of the best quality before we send the patient away and then results can be either same day or a couple of days depending on the referral.

Radiology is about technology and machines. The latest machine we have is called Cone Beam CT – instead of having a 2D image of teeth we can now have an insightful 3D image which can help aid treatments.

I would recommend other people to come into this role because it is a very rewarding one. As a radiographer you play an integral role in many patients' hospital journeys. This means that you are always helping and keeping patients happy and healthy.

I am very proud to work for the Trust. It has given me the best start to my career. I have been able to achieve things I have never thought I would be able to, thanks to the opportunities I have been given.



*"ELHT is showing a big commitment to the health of their diverse communities of East Lancashire."*

**ELHT works in partnership with others to improve the care and services it provides. It is part of the Health Equity Alliance which includes local organisations such as Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. Yasir Abdelhadi is the Public Health Specialist Registrar and explains the importance of this partnership.**

Health equity is making sure that the NHS is accessible to everyone; no matter where you live, what you look like or what language you speak. Health equity is achieved when everyone has the means to receive fair treatment so they can attain full potential for health and wellbeing.

We are proud to be part of it and together with ELHT and others we have implemented strategies where changes are already showing increased engagement and improvement in the health of our diverse communities who are reluctant to ask for help or struggle to interact.

We work to ensure our services are being provided with equity in mind. We review service data to make sure all our patients' needs are being met, ensuring no one is left behind.

The Outpatients Department has posters displayed (in different languages) advertising our interpretation services for those patients who don't speak English as their first language. Many missed appointments, or 'no shows' are to do with a language barrier so this way the patient can be assured that they and the medical person can speak via an interpreter. This will reduce the missed and no shows appointments and allow the patient to be seen – and heard – and put their health first.

We have also found that engaging more on social media attracts the younger community who again, for whatever reason, may feel reluctant to see a health advisor or attend their appointment.

Our goal is to provide equitable care to whoever walks through the hospital doors and make sure that that person is given care according to their health and the needs of them too.

We are shifting to a more holistic approach and making sure the needs of the person are what matter. It's exciting times and together, we will make a difference.





**Emma Watson is the Divisional Lead Pharmacist for Surgical and Anaesthetic Services and Family Care at ELHT. She has opened up about her struggles with anxiety to encourage other people to do the same and get the support they need.**

I have always had an instilled emphasis of working hard and my job requires a strong commitment to patient care but when I lost a friend of mine my coping mechanisms to carry on as normal failed.

I had a bit of a break down and my anxiety came to a head. Unable to function at work, I took time off and it forced me to take stock of how some of my behaviours and attitudes around work ethics and achievements were sometimes damaging for my mental health.

On my return I had incredible support from the Trust and Chaplain David Anderson, and the team at the Spiritual Centre were fantastic. Being able to tap into that when you are feeling anxious was a life saver for me.

Now I try not to beat myself up about things that go wrong or overanalyse challenging situations. I acknowledge that I am human, I'm not going to get everything right and all I can do is learn from things and move forward in a self-compassionate way.

To anyone suffering alone, please speak to someone and share your feelings. Your line manager can offer a range of different support services or speak to a family member - it feels liberating just to share. Try and talk to yourself as you would a best friend. Self-compassion takes practice, but it does help!

ELHT is committed to breaking down the barriers to talking about mental health. There is a strong culture of inclusivity here and in order to provide the best service possible to our patients, it is important that we bring our authentic and best selves into our workplace. Having the opportunity to talk through our mental struggles with colleagues and support services ensures we not only enjoy coming to work but can thrive in our roles and support each other.

*"Speaking up about your mental health is daunting but the reality is most of us experience anxiety at some point in our lives. It's a normal and understandable response to stressful situations or trauma."*



*"Volunteering is the best thing you can do and I'd recommend anyone who has some spare time to do it."*

**Christine Rafferty has been volunteering at ELHT since 2019. Named Volunteer of the Year at the Trust last year for her support during the pandemic, her friendly face welcomes patients and visitors behind Main Reception at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital.**

Back in 1999 my late dad Derek was treated at the former Blackburn Royal Infirmary and then Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital. The service he received was beyond words and I could never thank the hospital staff enough.

So, when I retired, I decided to volunteer. I wanted to pay them back for all the care and support they gave my dad.

I applied via Lancashire Volunteer Partnership and I started my first shift at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital in October 2019. I helped patients use the self-check-in machines near Main Reception and served tea and coffee to patients in the Emergency Department.

But when COVID-19 hit volunteers were no longer allowed in the Emergency Department and the self-check-in desks were closed so I worked at reception. We were called 'mask volunteers' because it was before mask-wearing was mandatory and our job was to ask patients to wear them and apply gel on their hands – a challenging time I must say, as we saw the best and worst of people!

During lockdown I was one of the 'baggage drop' volunteers. That meant, any bags that were dropped off for patients by their families we took to the ward. When I wasn't doing that, I was back at reception – and that's where I've stayed since.

I love it! Meeting people and talking to them is a daily joy. And if there isn't a Porter available to push a patient in a wheelchair to their appointment then I will do it. I appreciate and understand how busy my colleagues are so I'm happy to help in anyway I can.

Although I'm giving something back by volunteering it's also a wonderful experience for me. I've met some great friends – we even have a theatre group! Everyone is so friendly and the team on reception is like family.



**Fiona Wild was an Occupational Therapist (OT) before being seconded to Unison at ELHT to support union members. Recently she spent a week in The Gambia volunteering for the charity, The GLOVE Project.**

No two days are the same in my job. You never know what the next telephone call is going to be about, how many meetings you need to attend or how many issues you need to sort out from one day to the next – and I love it.

I chose to be an OT because of the way we see people as a whole: we empower, motivate, problem solve, enable and adapt.

That's why I was so impressed with The GLOVE project, a charity I found during a holiday with my husband. They are the only organisation in The Gambia that works intensively on rehabilitation and reintegration into a more normal life for child amputees.

They work tirelessly to ensure each child has a good fitting prosthetic, carry out extensive residential rehab and home visits. They also ensure a child has a place at a school and gives them a bicycle to help them get there as the distance would be too far to walk on the old prosthetic legs that they are fitted with.

We make a monthly donation to The GLOVE Project and receive a full breakdown, so we know the money is being put to good use. It was a humbling experience for myself and my colleague to spend a week working with the children doing core strengthening exercises and mobility practice with the boys who were on residential rehab. It makes you realise how lucky we are having the NHS.

I'm extremely proud to work in the NHS alongside some amazing people, I'm proud of the way we stick together and get each other through the tough times. The NHS consists of one team - we all have a role to play regardless of who you are, and one can't function without the other, this is what makes us unique.



*"A doctor adds days to life, an Occupational Therapist makes sure life is added to those days."*





**Haider Ali Shazad is the Medical Laboratory Assistant for Cellular Pathology. He previously worked in digital printing and graphic design but thanks to the ELHT's Kickstart programme he is on the career path to become a biomedical scientist.**

After completing my degree in 2021 in biomedical science I was searching for jobs to work within a laboratory. I wasn't having much success due to my lack of experience so when I saw ELHT's Kickstart programme I applied. The six-month placement offers young people between the ages of 18-24 the opportunity to gain paid work experience and qualifications within the NHS. This was my chance to get the experience I lacked!

It was 25 hours a week and initially the jobs on offer were clerical roles and patient services assistants. Therefore, I asked if I could work within the pathology laboratory, explaining that's where I wanted to pursue my career and thankfully the laboratory were pleased of the extra help!

My first day will always be special because I had finally got my foot in the door after trying for so long. Everyone was also very welcoming and respectful. But I worked so hard throughout the six months and this didn't go unnoticed. I applied for a full-time role when it became available and I am now on my journey to becoming a biomedical scientist one day.

ELHT is one big family and everyone has an important role to play in helping to deliver quality healthcare for patients whether that's a leading consultant or a porter.

The NHS is a fantastic place to grow and develop your career with many opportunities to continue progressing and gain different skills and qualities along the way.

*"I have a passion for helping others and being part of the NHS delivering good healthcare and helping save lives makes me proud to be where I am."*



**Maureen Woodhouse has been volunteering with ELHT since January 2019. She's volunteered in a few different roles within the Trust but is now a regular face in the ELHT&Me charity shop at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital.**

I used to be a PA (personal assistant) so when I retired, I decided to put my admin and organisational skills to good use and volunteered to help out with the administration side on the wards at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital.

Immediately, I loved working in the hospital environment. I really enjoyed coming in and meeting colleagues and patients but after a couple of years I fancied a change of scene from a desk role but wanted to stay within the hospital. So, I got in touch with the Trust's charity ELHT&Me and got a position within their shop. I started in November 2022 and I've not looked back! It's great fun and I definitely feel like I've found my niche because I love shopping, so I am always on hand to give advice to customers!

Denise, Demi and Becca who work for the charity are lovely to work with and the other volunteers are great too. It's a real family spirit. I currently volunteer every Wednesday for six hours.

I love volunteering and would recommend it to anyone who has some free time. Not only do you meet some wonderful people, it's a way of giving something back. I love being able to help patients, colleagues, and visitors, and it's become part of my life.

I feel I'm helping the Trust in my own little way by helping raise funds for it. I also find my volunteering is a great leveller in that I see how some people have heavy burdens to deal with and it makes me grateful for what I have.

*"I would recommend volunteering to anyone. It can mean different things to different people but one thing I know is it's good to be giving something back."*



*"Don't hold back – just do it as you never know what might happen."*

## **Andrew Graham juggles a full-time job with volunteering as Chairman of Royal Blackburn's Hospital Radio station – bringing soothing and happy tunes to patients' when they need it most.**

I have always liked entertaining people and I used to be a party DJ. Sadly, the hours required and the nature of the role began to take its toll, but I still wanted to do something to make people feel good so I decided to volunteer for Radio Hospitals Blackburn about six years ago.

It's certainly a completely different world to my full-time job as a warehouse assistant. You never do the same thing twice and my show is different every week. It's never dull!

My favourite part is the interaction with patients - we go onto the wards to gather requests or they phone their requests from their bedside. It feels amazing to know that I am making their stay in hospital that bit better and bringing a smile to their face.

It's not just me that feels this way – my wife Becky saw how much I enjoy it, so she signed up as a volunteer too and is now the Treasurer for the station.

One of my roles as Chairman is to recruit new volunteers so we can have more new and exciting shows for the patients. Many a successful career has begun with hospital radio so my advice to anyone would be don't hold back – just do it as you never know what might happen.

If you think you have what it takes to host your own radio show, email Andrew on [chairman@rhbonline.org.uk](mailto:chairman@rhbonline.org.uk) or to find out more go to their website [www.rhbonline.org.uk/](http://www.rhbonline.org.uk/).





*"The NHS is a wonderful institution. Being able to give something back, however small, benefits staff and patients and gives us a great deal of satisfaction."*

## **Andy and Maxine Whittaker are husband and wife who have been volunteering together at Pendle Community Hospital since 2020. Maxine explains what made them become volunteers for ELHT.**

I was Secretary for Rakehead Rehabilitation Centre at Burnley General Teaching Hospital before moving to Pendle Community Hospital as a Rehabilitation Services Officer until my retirement in 2011.

Andy and I went to live in Madeira for a few years and when we returned home in 2020 we contacted Pendle Community Hospital about volunteering for Friends of Pendle Community Hospital Charity Committee.

The hospital provides medical and nursing care for people with long term conditions and a rehabilitation service for people following illness or injury.

Obviously, I had a personal interest with Pendle and because Andy and I were keen gardeners it made sense to use our expertise, passion and skills to volunteer to look after the Roof Top Garden. It's a space where the rehabilitation inpatients go to relax and recover and a chance to have some TLC, and I know first-hand how important that is.

It's lovely to see the patients enjoying the fruits of our labour and it's also nice to have a chat with them too.

We don't have set days when we go to do the gardening, it's as and when required and depending on the weather!

When we aren't getting our hands dirty, we help with the clerical and admin work too. I'm the Secretary and Andy is the Treasurer for the committee. Andy keeps a rein on what money is being spent and I do all the admin work including taking minutes at the meetings and writing to patients and relatives if they have donated money to the wards. I also do the buying and distributing of any purchases that are made, following requests from all departments within the hospital.

We would encourage anyone who has an interest in helping others to join ELHT volunteers, it's a great way to meet other people and keep mind and body active.



**Denise Gee is Head of Charity at ELHT. She joined the Trust in July 2017 and said fundraising for the NHS is a mix of raising funds for something close to your heart – everyone, at some point, will inevitably need to use – as well as knowing there’s a tangibility to the projects you’re supporting. She explains the importance of volunteers who work for the hospital’s charity, ELHT&Me.**

Our volunteers are dedicated, passionate and enthusiastic people who form an integral part of the ELHT&Me team. Our volunteers raise significant funds, represent us at events and around the hospitals, support our office functions and raise the profile of ELHT&Me across the community.

Volunteers put the FUN into fundraising! They meet hundreds of people along the way who all want to make a difference and that is a wonderful and positive environment to be part of.

We help people find ways of using their individual skills, talents and time to support our local NHS. Our volunteering opportunities cover a range of roles including serving our customers in the retail section of our brand new hub, bucket collecting in local supermarkets, selling raffle tickets, distributing collection tins and supporting community events.

For the community events, we have ‘micro volunteers’. These are people who help at community-organised events such as a bonfire night displays so they are able to drop in when it best suits.

My team and I get to meet many grateful patients and families – and they’re some of the most inspiring and passionate people I’ve ever had the fortune to come across.

We simply could not do all that we do without our inspiring, passionate and caring team of volunteers.

*“I often think I have the best of both worlds in my job – I work for our wonderful NHS and the charity sector.”*





*"There was no reason why I got cancer. It's been one hell of a year, but cancer has made me stronger and more resilient. I'm lucky to be here and I'll never take a single day for granted."*

**In November 2021 Paige Barnes was 25 when she found a lump in her right armpit and diagnosed with breast cancer. She underwent four surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy and is now cancer free. She's raised over £8,000 for the breast clinic at Burnley General Teaching Hospital.**

I kept being told I wouldn't have breast cancer – I was too young. However, after an initial biopsy and ultrasound, and surgery to remove my lump, I was diagnosed with HER-2 – a protein-based cancer.

The news wasn't what any of us had expected – cancer had never entered my head!

I teach Law at college and was worried about my students – and my hair. I had lovely long thick blonde hair that I'd grown for my wedding which we'd had to postpone due to COVID.

My second round of surgery was to do a 'clearance' of my breast and lymph nodes in my armpit. It had not spread to my lymph nodes but was still within my breast so that meant chemo and more surgery.

I didn't realise the hair loss would be so imminent. That was mentally hard. My sister tattooed my brows and eyeliner for me in preparation and I opted for the cold cap therapy which helps to prevent hair loss, but one day I lost 50% of my hair.

I kept a healthy diet and fitness and refused to wallow. My goal was to beat this, and of course I had age on my side.

During the fourth round of chemo, I also started target therapy, a newish treatment that involves an injection in my leg every three weeks to target the HER-2 direct and stop it reproducing.

Waiting for the results from my surgery was the worst part and when my consultant rang on 1 July – what should have been our wedding day – to say I was cancer free it was the best day of my life.

I had 10 rounds of radiotherapy as a precaution and in January this year an MRI showed all-clear. I will continue with yearly MRIs until I'm eligible for a monogram screening, but it's a small price to pay for having my life back. I'm back at work while still battling against the side effects from treatment and continued targeted therapy. I'm pleased to be back, but in all honestly it has been really hard.

To say thanks for the care I received I held a fundraising evening last August at Riley's in Colne - it was amazing how much support it received. It was a room full of love as family, friends and nurses from the ward gathered together. In total we raised an astonishing £8,000 which has gone towards buying two cold caps at ELHT.







**Mr Robert Salaman is a Consultant Vascular Surgeon at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital. In 2015 he joined The Army Reserves and committed to serving 27 days a year, which is made up of a two-week annual camp, evenings and weekends. In May 2022 he volunteered for a six-month deployment in Mali, West Africa as part of the surgical trauma team.**

In 2015, when I turned 50, I was well established and happy in my career but I craved a new challenge. I'd always admired and respected the military so when I walked past The Army Reserve recruitment desk at Blackburn Royal Teaching Hospital I applied - and I haven't looked back since.

Open to all walks of life, The Army Reserves gives people with specialist skills, such as medical, engineering or IT, a range of exciting opportunities to use them in new ways by providing support to the Regular Army. I'm attached to an army field hospital but having a profession or specific skill-set isn't a prerequisite to signing up. And the best thing about it is you get paid, travel, have access to training and learning opportunities and meet an exceptional and diverse group of people; all the time doing something worthwhile.

It helps enormously with my mental wellbeing because it gives me a break and relaxation from my day job. I had to get permission from my line manager, who was fully supportive of my decision. And while I'm mobilised and working with the army a locum covers my patients and duties at the hospital - all paid for by the Army.

The opportunities presented to me through the army have improved the calibre of person I am and without doubt made me a better doctor. I've been on trauma, leadership and management courses and the skills I've learnt have not only been put to use in the army, but have made me a more valuable employee to ELHT.



*"Joining The Army Reservists has enhanced my overall career satisfaction and I love being one. My only regret is not signing up sooner."*



**Tracey Wright is an Administrative Assistant based within community services at Burnley General Teaching Hospital. She supports nursing colleagues by taking on any clerical tasks that may take them away from patient care.**

I joined the Trust in 2009 after 25 years of owning my own business so I came to the NHS from a completely different world, which was quite an eye opener at the time.

The first thing I did was put a number of systems and processes into place. I wanted to make things more logical to enable the nursing teams we support to do their jobs the best they can.

My role isn't hands-on with patients, but I can do a spreadsheet and I can use my business experience to bring a more logical approach to the service. I look at the best business opportunity and the best business way of doing it. Not financially, but the best way of addressing a situation to make it work better.

During COVID, I went out delivering whatever the community teams needed, such as personal protective equipment or lateral flow tests. It didn't matter the time of day, I travelled to wherever necessary because it was important that those colleagues had everything they needed. I wanted to protect them and make sure they were alright.

That's what I do. That's how I see my role - making sure those clinically trained colleagues have got the time to do their jobs to the best of their abilities. I would rather spend my time printing or laminating so they can do what they do best.

I guess you could say I am the team's mum and I am so proud to be part of the NHS as it reaches its 75th birthday.

*"The NHS is the country's mum – it looks after everybody unconditionally."*





*"Organ donation is an amazing gift that offers people the chance to regain some normality and have a future."*

## **Rebecca Brazendale, a Deputy Directorate Manager at ELHT gave a colleague a second chance at life when she donated him her kidney.**

When my colleague Andrew Sloane told me he had end-stage renal failure and required a transplant or would need dialysis for the rest of his life I felt helpless.

Family members and friends came forward to donate but weren't a match, so I offered to donate. Against all odds, I was found as a match and thankfully able to change his life.

Andrew, a Consultant Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon and Medical Examiner for the Trust, took some persuading that I was fully aware of the sheer magnitude of what I was offering to do and that I was more than happy to do it.

Andrew was fitting a gruelling dialysis schedule around work so, when after weeks of testing I was found to be a match I couldn't believe it and was so happy that the transplant surgery was able to go ahead.

On the day of surgery, in Manchester, I went down into theatre first and once my procedure was complete, Andrew was brought to theatre to receive his new kidney. I saw him after his and I couldn't believe the change in him already, it was amazing! It was such an emotional experience and one I will never forget - especially knowing the person you've donated it to.

A Liverpool FC fan I laugh at the fact that I gave my kidney to a Manchester United fan!

Joking aside, it's so humbling to be able to give the gift of normality and life to someone. And now both our families are firm friends and it's amazing to see him living life again to its full potential.

Organ donation is an amazing gift that offers seriously ill people the chance to regain some sense of normality and have a future. I now focus my energy on encouraging as many people as possible to discuss donations with their family and make their wishes known.







**Hashmina Hawa Rahman is one of the Digestive Diseases Administrative Assistants at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital. Her ELHT career started thanks to Kickstart, a Job Centre programme, and she is grateful for the patient service she gets from her employer too.**

I feel like I've become part of the furniture at ELHT thanks to the way the services have helped me both personally and professionally - I was even born at the former Queen's Park Hospital in 1996!

I was born with a health condition that has continuously affected my life to some extent, and almost nine years ago I was diagnosed with Obstructive Sleep Apnoea, a relatively common condition where the walls of the throat relax and narrow during sleep, interrupting normal breathing. It can lead to regularly interrupted sleep, which in turn has a big impact on your quality of life and increases the risk of developing certain conditions.

The ongoing care and treatment I receive from the Trust has been the best. And because of them I'm more independent and stronger and have been able to work for the Trust – like a full circle moment!

I offer administrative support to the Gastroenterology team, and Digestive Diseases overall. It involves data inputting, patient and consultant liaising, and I also support a patient helpline.

ELHT has made sure I have everything I need for me to carry out my job to my best ability – something I am extremely grateful for.

I have my own desk, which rises and lowers so I can work standing up if needed, a specially made chair, keyboard, mouse and foot stool to accommodate my needs.

I chose the role because of the caring and safeguarding side to it, plus I am very good with IT programmes, so being an administrative support worker meant that I would be doing a job that I was comfortable and confident with.

I am proud to work for the NHS. It is a rewarding experience and respectable job and I like the fact diversity and equality is followed and valued at ELHT.

*"If someone has a disability, visible or non-visible, I believe that they shouldn't let it define the person they are."*



**Nina Burton is a Play Specialist on the Children's Assessment Unit and Blood Clinic at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital and The Children's Outpatients Department at Burnley General Teaching Hospital. She was a Play Leader for 11 years before starting her new role last year.**

Our main aim in the Play Team is to reduce any fear and anxiety that a patient may have when coming into hospital. This may be done by distraction when having certain procedures, such as having bloods taken, a cannular inserted or scans.

Praising and rewarding our children and young adults is vital, as some experiences can be overwhelming, so we have lots of bravery certificates and gifts that we provide so that our patients always leave with a positive experience.

We work with a lot of patients who come into hospital for operations. Our role is to prepare their parents or carers appropriately, which we will do on the day they are having the operation. We also have pre-ops on a Saturday morning to allow the patients and their family or carer to familiarise themselves with the ward and colleagues before they are admitted.

We love to provide all our patients with a variety of age-appropriate activities such as board games, paints and Xbox to make their experience fun and positive.

On challenging days, the team pulls together to support one another by taking time out to listen to each other's concerns, worries and feelings in general.

I wanted this role because I wanted a challenge! Every day is different, and the job is very rewarding. To put a smile on a child's or young person's face when they are going through a difficult time is the best feeling in the world.

I would recommend this role to someone who is passionate about working with children and young people. It is a fast-paced job that requires lots of skills, such as time management, people skills, using initiative, communication skills and working well within a big busy team.

*"Being a Play Specialist is fabulous! I get the opportunity to work with so many lovely children and families who really appreciate our role."*



**Dunni Akinbulumo is the Pastoral Care Nurse for International Recruitment. She is responsible for supporting internationally recruited nurses, knowing first-hand what is involved after she came to the UK from Nigeria in 2019. She joined ELHT as Staff Nurse in 2020.**

My primary motivation for becoming a nurse was my passion to assist and support others. I have always been drawn to a career that allows me to provide holistic care, and nursing fulfilled all my expectations.

Being a Pastoral Care Nurse means I am involved in helping the positive and seamless transition of international nurses into their new roles. I know that starting a career in a new country and leaving family behind can be daunting, so I am really happy that I can make a difference and help new nurses settle into their new home and job.

Joining ELHT has proven to be one of the most rewarding choices I've made. I have had the privilege of working alongside colleagues who exemplify the core values of the organisation and being part of the ELHT family fills me with pride, as the Trust places great importance on colleague wellbeing and patient safety.

ELHT also values diversity, inclusion and offers a range of opportunities for career growth and development. The opportunity and accessibility to progress in more senior roles was a key difference that I noted when I moved here, as in my home country senior positions were typically attained after a certain number of years of service. A lot of international nurses that I support also experienced similar barriers to career progression back home, so it gives me immense joy watching them grow in their careers and stepping up into senior posts.

The NHS is a diverse and inclusive organisation that offers abundant opportunities for learning and development. I would encourage new colleagues to set their sights on excellence and strive to become the best version of themselves.

*"The emphasis on growth and adaptability contributes to the dynamic and enriching environment at ELHT. There is lots of support in place for internationally recruited nurses to grow and reach their potential, enabling them to provide exceptional care."*







**Joanne Cranham started working for the NHS in 2013 as a District Nurse and joined the District Nurse Service at East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust in 2020. In November 2022 she became Community Practitioner for the regulated care sector, a new role within the Trust.**

I pinch myself everyday as I believe this role was designed for me and I thoroughly enjoy coming to work!

We are small team of two currently serving a community of 135 care homes. The main aspect of the role is to help residents avoid coming to hospital and we do this by supporting, up skilling and educating care home colleagues to understand the route to avoid this. We also get referrals from the Front Door Team in our Emergency Department or GPs when they identify a frail and elderly patient who won't benefit from hospital admittance but needs home assistance and care.

We are unique in the sense that I believe no other trust offers what we do for care homes. I believe that through this new role we are breaking down barriers and helping to promote positive working relationships which in turn, enhance patient care.

Originally, I qualified as a primary school teacher but realised that wasn't for me. My current role allows me to combine my passion for educating while also nursing and caring for some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. I also get to cuddle and play with dogs and puppies as many of our care homes have therapy dogs to offer comfort and support to residents and colleagues, so that's a bonus!

ELHT has allowed me to make this role whatever I believe was needed and for that trust and support I will be forever grateful.

Working for the NHS as it approaches 75 is inspiring. An innovative organisation, it's given me opportunities within service development, quality improvement and doors that lead to the path I am now on. It's like no other healthcare provider I am truly honoured and proud to work for it.

*"I could talk for hours about my job and would tell any nurse with a passion for community nursing that this is the best job in the world!"*



*"ELHT helps all the communities in East Lancashire regardless of colour and creed. We are extremely lucky to have that."*

## **Parwaiz Akhtar is a Healthcare Assistant within Critical Care at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital and was recently named Mayor of Blackburn with Darwen 2023/24.**

I have been working for the Trust since 2012 in numerous support roles but within critical care since 2018. I help the doctors and nurses to look after patients and do the stock take for the department. Given the nature of the job it is a challenging role that's not easy, but I really enjoy it and my colleagues are great and very friendly.

I've always loved to help people so my job within the Trust is perfect. It's also how I ended up standing as councillor for my local borough.

I had been helping members of my community who don't speak English as their first language to translate official documents and forms, such as a marriage or death certificate and acting as interpreter for a meeting or event.

For me, it was something I did without any thought. But for them having someone who could help them – especially in times of need or stress - they were so grateful for my assistance that they said I should stand as a councillor so I can help even more people – so I did!

However, I never thought for one minute I would be elected Mayor for Blackburn with Darwen Council. That's been an absolute privilege and honour.

As Mayor I represent the council within the chambers and at public functions and charitable or award events. I have also chosen to support East Lancashire Hospice, Nightsafe and the Trust's charity ELHT&Me.

I'm looking forward to meeting people from diverse backgrounds and support our communities to grow stronger, regardless of any difference. I believe that being Mayor alongside my position at ELHT I will be able to accomplish this.

As we approach the NHS' 75th birthday I feel very proud and happy to be working for the Trust. I also know that the community really appreciate the help they get too – something all my ELHT colleagues should be proud about.







*"If it wasn't for the critical action by the team at ELHT my dad wouldn't be here today. I'm eternally grateful for how everyone worked together to save his life."*

**In 2006 ELHT saved Bill Johnston's dad's life. From then on Bill knew he wanted to work in a hospital to try and give something back for what they had done for him and his family. He has worked for the NHS for 23 years and since September 2019 he has been a Health and Wellbeing Advisor for ELHT.**

My role gives me the opportunity to support members of our ELHT family within all dimensions of wellbeing and help bridge the gap between thinking and doing when it comes to empowering them to focus on their health and their wellbeing - and that is what I truly love about it.

Working in Occupational Health and Wellbeing Services has allowed me to put a greater focus on supporting the inner wellbeing of our NHS colleagues through supporting their physical and mental wellness. Many have suffered with stress, burnout, reduced self-care, weight issues, anxiety and depression, hypertension, sleep problems - the list goes on - so this support has been essential.

The wellbeing programmes and conversations create a safe and confidential space where colleagues can access the pathway that meets their needs, as well as the advice and guidance that can support their inner health and wellbeing. I believe that by focusing on inner health wellbeing within the NHS, and developing regular wellbeing practice, colleagues are able to build more collaborative cultures that are more supportive in general, and therefore help strengthen all relationships.

Essentially, it is allowing colleagues to show the best version of themselves, which in return will help the organisation to continue to provide safe, personal and effective care for our patients.

I am privileged to be in a position where I can provide advice, support and guidance for our ELHT colleagues.

Working for the NHS all these years has taught me that the smallest things can make the biggest difference to people. I have worked with some amazing and talented teams, who have helped me to grow as a person.

I am currently studying Health Coaching at the College of Naturopathic Medicine, which focuses heavily on holistic health and wellbeing. This educational journey will add even more skills to my tool kit. My plan is to stay with our ELHT family and continue to support the hard working and dedicated individuals within it.







**Hannah Kulbacki is the Lead Head and Neck Nurse for ELHT. Based at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital she has worked within the speciality of head and neck since 2009.**

I have dedicated my whole career to the speciality of head and neck and still find myself learning on the job every day. Head and neck is a complex speciality that can be both challenging and rewarding at the same time.

Our dynamic team work collaboratively providing high quality patient centred care and strive to achieve the best possible functional and positive outcomes for all our patients throughout their cancer journey. I am an advocate for our head and neck patients when they are undergoing a really difficult time of their lives.

I see my own cancer follow up patients and run a personal stratified follow up service for thyroid patients in East Lancashire in coordination with Christie's Hospital in Manchester. This is a new service improvement that has really taken off in the last 12 months with noticeable positive impact.

We have recently enrolled in various research trials in head and neck and I am the tracheostomy lead nurse for the Trust. I'm proud to be part of the team and the gold standard services we provide.

The best part about the job is the patients and seeing the positive outcomes they achieve. I work in a very dynamic integral team made up of nurses, doctors, radiologists and many more and together we have such a positive work ethic. I appreciate and respect how each of the different roles within the MDT can contribute to the effectiveness of the team and how they complement the service we provide.

Our inclusive and professional team always go the extra mile for patients and colleagues. I recently completed the National 3 Peak Challenge in 24 hours and raised £1,500 for our head and neck ward. We plan to turn a spare room into a retreat for our patients undergoing major cancer treatment.

ELHT colleagues keep the patients' best interests at the heart of the work they do. I am honoured to be a part of the ELHT family and hope to be so for many years to come!

*"It is such a privilege to help people at a difficult time of their lives and make a positive difference!"*



**Debbie Hood is an interim Assistant Matron within the District Nursing Service. She started her career as a Health Care Assistant and qualified as a registered Nurse in 2017. She is planning to study for a master's degree in Community Specialist Practice.**

I had originally wanted to get a job within physiotherapy but after working as an Assistant Practitioner with the District Nurses as a stop gap, I fell in love with district nursing.

Before I completed my physiotherapy degree, I completed a foundation degree in health and social care. I had been a care assistant, working part-time while still at school and going full time once I left. I had no qualifications so once I'd had my first child at 21-years-old I returned to night school to sit my GCSEs and A Levels.

I feel privileged to be in this position. I love meeting people from all walks of life, all with different stories to tell and feel proud to wear my uniform. Being able to provide palliative and end of life care for patients in their own home, to fulfil their last wishes is a massive privilege.

During the pandemic I was diagnosed with stage 4 melanoma (skin cancer). I didn't have a good or bad prognosis and started immunotherapy. During treatment I was unable to see patients face to face which I found really hard. Thankfully, my colleagues and manager supported me and I was able to remain in work and learn new skills around leadership, quality improvement and audits. I also worked with the Nursing Assessment and Performance Framework (NAPF) team and once back seeing patients I was able to transfer all these skills into my role and provide support to my colleagues.

I love working at ELHT. We are like a family and everybody is so supportive.

Nursing isn't an easy career choice, but I would still recommend to anybody who is thinking about it. It's such a rewarding job and most of my friends are past or current healthcare colleagues.

*"I love that I can actually make a difference to people's lives and be there for them at some of their most vulnerable times."*



*"As brilliant as the care and help we provide is, I know that patients don't really want to be in hospital and home is always best."*

**Dionne Hilton started as a Registered Nurse on Ward C14B at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital in 2014. Now Sister on the same specialist ward which deals with patients waiting for or undergoing life changing surgery, she won a recent Trust award for going above and beyond for her patients.**

My role involves identifying patients who I believe will be ready to be discharged from hospital within the next couple of days and plan accordingly.

Whenever I meet a patient, I am always looking to see what their needs and wishes are, identifying what social support they already have in place and whether or not they would need extra help and support at home. I strive to find out what matters to them and how I can accommodate getting them home as quickly as possible.

My role is also about listening to what the patient needs and wants. Many of our patients receive palliative care for end of life so all they want to do is go home to spend their last days surrounded by their loved ones. Again, we do everything we can to make that happen.

The best thing about my job is the patients. You build a rapport with them at their time of need and provide care and support at their most vulnerable. I love seeing the progress they make and it is always an emotional and proud moment when I witness them going home to fulfil their wishes. The look of gratitude on their faces as they hug you goodbye makes the hard work worthwhile.

During my time at ELHT I have seen colleagues come and go from the ward, the team and the Trust change, but what stays consistent is the patients and our need to provide the best care possible.

I'm proud to work for the Trust that covers such a huge area of East Lancashire providing care to a variety of people that could include family and friends. I believe that if you work somewhere, you'd be happy to receive care from there too.

I also have some incredible colleagues; without them I wouldn't be able to do my job, so thank you.







**Alvino Gipaya has been the Decontamination and Laundry Manager for the Trust since November 2022. Yesterday was his first year celebrating National Healthcare Estates and Facilities Day, the event recognising heroes who work behind the scenes to provide an exceptional and important service.**

The roles within Estates and Facilities are completely behind the scenes and out of the limelight, but the work they do is vital in the context of infection prevention, linen services and successful outcomes of surgical procedures.

The decontamination management team oversees the Hospital Sterilisation & Decontamination Unit (HSDU), endoscopy and laundry units across Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital and Burnley General Teaching Hospital. On an average day the laundry processes 1,400 towels, 2,000 sheets and 1,200 pillowcases!

People are at the heart of everything we do and part of my role is to ensure that we maintain high levels of quality via quality assurance, audit compliance, infection prevention control to name but a few, to ensure our patients have safe surgical outcomes.

Having a day to celebrate National Healthcare Estates and Facilities is so important I was thrilled when it was introduced last year. I am so proud of my colleagues and the contributions they give to the Trust on a daily basis to make sure it runs smoothly and being recognised for that is a great achievement. They play such an important role that without them coming in everyday day and doing what they do ELHT wouldn't have such a fantastic service. They are truly valued, appreciated and do a great job.

From my first day the support I received was incredible. I was nervous and didn't know what to expect but the team welcomed me with open arms. I am proud to be part of the ELHT family and working for the NHS will always be part of my identity as the majority of Filipino here in the UK works for them.

*"Our roles are completely behind the scenes and out of the limelight, but the work is vital and people are at the heart of everything we do."*



*"I am a caring person and passionate about helping people in their time of need."*

**Tanya Thompson started her NHS journey as a volunteer for East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust in 2019. She credits the encouragement and support she received from the Trust and colleagues to enable her to pursue her dream and become a Maternity Support Worker.**

I knew I wanted a career in care – I just wasn't sure where to start.

As a stay-at-home mum I hoped by volunteering it would give me some ideas on which area of the Trust I would be interested in working.

Initially, I volunteered at Burnley General Teaching Hospital on the Elective Centre where I assisted nurses in their daily duties, such as collecting patients for theatre, making drinks and cleaning the equipment. But when my lovely boss Lynn Hackett asked if I wanted to move to the postnatal ward and help with infant feeding I jumped at the chance. I took to the role really well and was offered further training to support parents on their feeding journey.

I continued to volunteer during the pandemic and then applied for bank shifts on various wards until I applied for my current role – which I love.

My job involves supporting newborn babies and mothers post birth. Some of our babies are unwell and some of our mothers are unwell. I aim to make the mothers and families stay as positive as possible with the highest standard of care.

I'm experienced in breast feeding support, safeguarding and psychological support. I work independently in other areas including antenatal, and at the birth centre and birth suite. I also cover bank shifts on the children's ward which is such a special position to be in because it involves building a trusting relationship and preparing children for them going into theatre.

I love my job and I am proud to work for ELHT. I feel privileged to share the first moments with the families of our newborn babies I feel proud and fulfilled when I leave my shift knowing I have made a difference. I truly believe if it wasn't for the support from Lynn Hackett and the confidence from the Trust I wouldn't be where I am today.



*"ELHT really was a family affair for me! My mum worked there, so did my daughter and my son and his partner work there now."*

**Susan Huddleston (nee Dinham) started work for the Trust as a Catering Assistant in the Catering Department at Queen's Park Hospital – now Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital - in July 1969 when she was just 15 years old. After 54 years of service her final position for the Trust was as a Bereavement Office before she retired.**

I finished school on the Friday, went for the interview with my dad, and started at the hospital the week later!

The manager said he would give me a trial, but Dad said he should pay me, so he did! I earned two shillings an hour – 10 pence in today's money – but one of the ladies I worked with was a union representative so after 18 months it doubled to match the same wage as my female colleagues.

My mum Iris worked at the hospital too as a Catering Assistant. Like me, we worked on the wards serving patients their meals. I'm not sure if she put a good word in but back then it was easy to get a job. I was never late and never had much sickness in my working life.

I was based in the dining room, as we called it in those days. I had my son Christopher and my daughter Rachel during those years and was later made Supervisor – a job I loved!

We moved the dining room to what we now know as The Grane Restaurant and hosted functions and theme nights for clinical management, which I was responsible for organising.

We used to put matching tablecloths on all the table to make it look special and I got to meet so many different people, it was lovely.

By 2007 I was working in the General Office where I stayed until my retirement. I was made Higher Clerical Officer and then the last two years I was a Bereavement Officer, helping bereaved families.

Over the years I had a great rapport with colleagues who were a pleasure to work with and we had great friendships in and out of work. We socialised together on nights out and held Unison dances in the Park View offices – great memories I'll cherish forever.





**Catherine Gill knew she wanted to be a nurse from an early age and has worked for the Trust for 22 years. Starting her ELHT career as a Staff Nurse on the Urology ward she is now a Community Practitioner for the regulated care sector.**

I started my nurse training at just 18 years old at Manchester University. A big eye opener for a country girl moving to the city so young! I completed most of my nurse training at Manchester Royal Infirmary, which was a great experience as I got to be involved in many complex areas of care.

On qualifying I started my career with ELHT in 2001 and I worked on a urology ward at the old Blackburn Royal Infirmary with a fantastic team who supported me and helped build my confidence as a newly qualified staff nurse. I also worked at Clitheroe Community Hospital on the ward, within the old day hospital and as part of the falls team.

The last 10 years have been spent working in Outpatients Department at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital as a Staff Nurse before making Sister. This was more of a managerial role and although it was invaluable experience, I really missed hands-on nursing which is why I jumped at the chance to apply for the Community Practitioner role which I have been doing since January.

A new and developing role, I love the variety. We support all the care homes and residents in East Lancashire, providing education and acting upon referrals we receive. I worked in a care home from the age of 15 so I fully appreciate how hard care home staff work and our role helps and enables staff to access support when needed and avoid a hospital admission.

I am proud to work for the NHS and would definitely recommend a career in nursing. Not only does it allow you the choice to work in such a variety of specialities and settings, but it is also an extremely rewarding job and ELHT is a great place to work.

*"A big part of our role is advance care planning which improves the quality of end-of-life care that someone receives."*



*"Eid is an opportunity for friends and loved ones and an occasion to thank God for all the blessings received."*

**Tasneem Khalifa works as an Administrator in the Dietetics Department at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital. As we welcome Eid al-Adha this week, the second Eid, Tasneem, who is a member of the Muslim staff network, explains what the celebration means for her.**

My Eid is spent waking up at the crack of dawn for morning prayers, where the men in the household will go to the mosque to perform Eid prayer. There, they donate charity to the poor, giving everyone the opportunity to celebrate and to remember the less fortunate. We dress up in our best clothes and gather at our elder's house. Once everyone has returned from the Eid prayers, we have an Eid breakfast which contains a selection of sweet and savoury items, which at some gatherings has turned out to be a feast.

The day is spent cooking, laughing and making memories. We exchange presents, money and spend quality time with family and friends. Family members take the day off from work but this year our team has agreed to do a shorter day so we can all have some time with our family.

Muslims celebrate Eid to honour our Prophet Ibrahim's loyalty to God and his willingness to sacrifice his son, Ismail. Muslims around the world perform qurbani (sacrifice) of an animal to remember what Ibrahim sacrificed.

Growing up there were many years where we would do this sacrifice at home. Everyone in the house had a little role to play during the ritual. My role was to distribute the little portions of meat out to local neighbours and to family friends. Over the years this has not been feasible, so we send money abroad to a poorer country where the sacrifice of the animal is carried out. The meat is then distributed to the poor families who can't afford meat and is enjoyed by all.

To all my colleagues, I'd like to wish you a lovely Eid Mubarak. May this special day fill your life with joy and happiness.



**Leanne Kinder is a Trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioner in frailty and long-term conditions in community therapy at ELHT. Based at Pendle Community Hospital, Leanne has a physiotherapist background and is passionate about delivering needs-led services to improve quality of life.**

I started my Physiotherapy career at ELHT in 2000. After five years I left to work in different trusts in London, York and Greater Manchester and returned to ELHT in November 2022 to start this new and exciting role within integrated therapies (community rehabilitation and community wards).

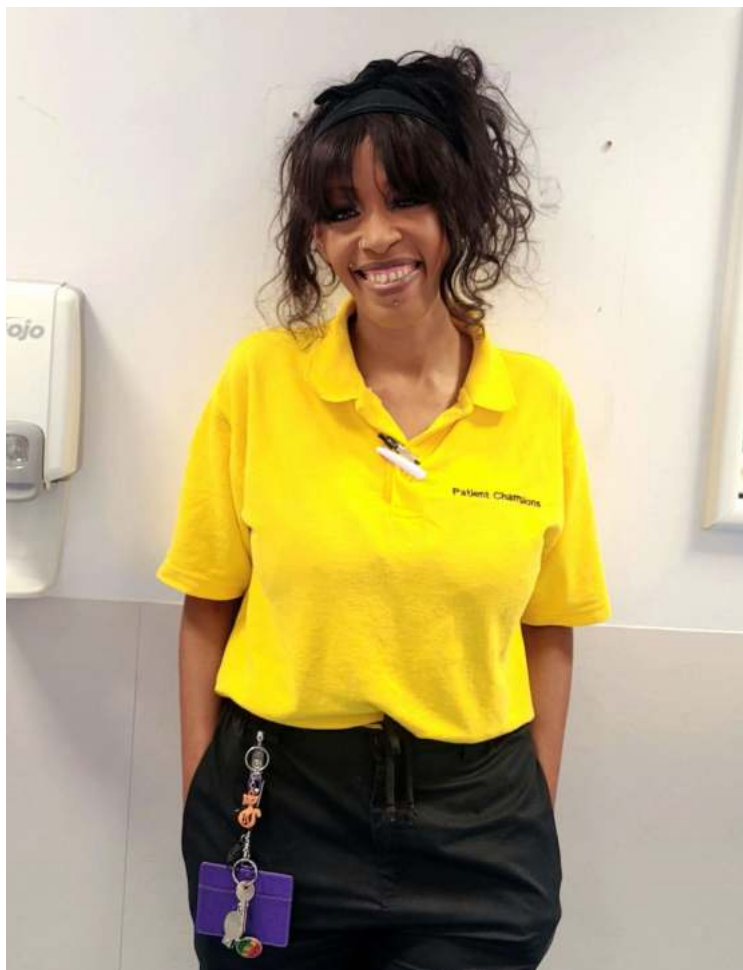
My role is to improve patient outcomes in patients with frailty and long-term conditions across the Trust. I am working to develop, innovate, provide clinical leadership and support education, whilst undertaking the advanced clinical practice apprenticeship.

In integrated therapies we see adults with rehabilitation needs, from routine to complex conditions, enabling optimisation and self-management of long-term conditions in anyone 18 and over. Patients do not need to have a specific condition or diagnosis to be referred, therapy is needs-led, personalised, and works to promote independence and self-management. We accept referrals from all sources, including self-referrals.

I'm so proud to work for ELHT and the NHS. I love to see patients succeed at what they want to achieve, and I thrive off patient-centred care. This is without doubt the most rewarding aspect of the role. I am seeing this not just through the patients I see but through the great work of all the therapists, assistant practitioners, and therapy assistants in the Integrated therapy teams.

*"I love to see patients succeed at what they want to achieve, and I thrive off patient-centred care."*





**Michelle Ayrton is a Patient Champion for A&E at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital. The non-clinical role focuses on patients' needs and since starting in January, Michelle has won two Trust awards for her work.**

Due to the busy nature of A&E it's my job to make sure I do my best to make patients feel as comfortable and safe as possible and support them in any way I can.

My role is varied. I make sure the wards are clean, answer the Patients Phone (a line for patients' families to call) and assist patients with making calls from their mobile. I order and collect patients' meals from the Trust' kitchen and, where needed, I help patients to eat.

I accompany patients outside for fresh air and I'm always on hand to answer any questions or concerns they may have. While I do my best to resolve them, if I can't I speak with colleagues to find an answer. It's important that patients are as comfortable as possible, so I check that patients aren't in any pain and check for pressure sores. If the patient needs pain medication or repositioning, I alert a nurse.

Being empathetic, a good communicator and listener and team player are essential parts of the job. Placing myself in their position and considering how I would want to be treated, helps me to provide the best care I can. It's always nice to be nice; especially when someone is having a tough time.

The best thing about my job are the people – our patients and my colleagues. The role and the environment challenging, but I like a challenge and I like to help. I don't like people feeling alone, or their concerns not being addressed. That's where I can make a difference because I can dedicate my time to having meaningful conversations and provide the support that's needed.

I'm so proud to work with the best set of people who since day one has treated me as part of the ELHT family. The NHS not only serves those in need it offers colleagues the opportunities to develop and grow within the organisation, to be part of something special – and that's worth celebrating!

*"If I can help one person and make a difference then my role is complete and that alone makes me happy and proud."*



*"The best thing about my job is the team I work with and the patients. Having the privilege of being part of their lives at what can be a traumatic and sad time."*

**Katrina Gibson is a Community Staff Nurse at Clitheroe Health Centre. She started work for Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Health Authority in October 1989 as an Enrolled Nurse. She qualified as a District Enrolled Nurse in 1991 and a State Registered Nurse in 1995.**

I've seen the role of a Community Nurse change and develop a lot through my years of working.

The National Health and Community Care Act in 1990 changed the way personal care was delivered. Previously, Community Nurses spent every morning and night visiting patients' homes to get them in and out of bed, but the Act introduced care agencies who provided this personal care instead.

The working shifts of community nurses changed. Beforehand, they worked 8.30am to 5pm, or 6.30pm to 11pm – shifts which particularly suited working mums. If a patient needed care, they called their GP out in the middle of the night! But the new shift put pain to that when it introduced round the clock care.

We had to learn a greater range of clinical skills, as the role required and changed, and become more IT savvy with the introduction of e-learning and mobile working

When they introduced university-based conversion courses to become a state registered nurse this made a huge difference to my career. By having an educational qualification I was able to become senior staff nurse on the relief team.

I love my job and I consider it a privilege to be able to drive around the beautiful area we live in. I have stayed in my role for this long because of the invaluable team work and support I receive from the wonderful nurses past and present who I am lucky to work with.

I am proud to be a part of ELHT and the NHS and even more proud to have the opportunity to be a part of many patients lives.



**John Jackson worked as a porter at the Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital for 20 years, winning numerous awards and accolades for his additional voluntary role as a bereavement champion. He is now winding down to retirement continuing to work within the logistics services at the Trust.**

Portering was a perfect role for me as I love helping people and felt that I could make a real difference when they were at their most vulnerable.

The job involved mostly moving patients from one ward to another or to x-ray. When I moved a patient I would introduce myself and look them in the eye when I spoke to them, reducing their worry and make them feel involved. If they were able to have one, I would make them a brew in their new ward and help them to settle in. I believe it is important to deliver this standard of care which takes no extra time or effort but makes a big difference to the patient.

On the occasions where I had to move a patient who had died, I would always knock on the door in case family members were with them – but I would always talk to the patient whilst preparing to move them. I would always try to find a flower to place on the body because I think it is a kindly gesture.

I have had many highlights throughout my time in the NHS, the biggest being winning a Kate Granger Award – that was extra special as she chose me personally not long before she died – I also featured in a national 'HealthCare Heroes' book because of it. And yes, I am going to miss it terribly when I retire but I have so many happy memories.

I will also always still be available for anyone who needs a chat, a hug or just someone to sit there with them quietly – it costs nothing but can mean the world to someone.

*"Care for patients and their families' continues even after death. I would always treat the patient, whether deceased or alive, as I would my own mum."*





*“Seeing patients relearn how to pick up a drink, take a few steps, say a few words or make a sandwich for the first time, is always so rewarding and keeps me striving to ensure we deliver the best rehab we can so that patients can achieve the best quality of life possible.”*

**Sonia Grimshaw has worked for ELHT since qualifying as an Occupational Therapist in 1999. She has worked in a number of different teams to gain a wide range of skills and knowledge in various specialities and is now an Advanced Clinical Practitioner at Rakehead Rehab Centre in Burnley General Teaching Hospital.**

I found a real passion and enjoyment in working with patients who have neurological conditions and so decided to specialise in neurorehabilitation – the service provides multidisciplinary rehab for patients at various stages of their recovery.

I work with patients who have acquired brain injuries, strokes, spinal injuries and other neurological conditions. My job is very varied and one day is never the same as the next which is one of the things I love about it.

I work across the full neurorehab pathway – this means seeing patients at various stages of their rehabilitation journey as inpatients, outpatients and at home in the community. My role is to provide assessment and rehabilitation and support the team to ensure we deliver high quality evidence-based rehabilitation to help patients achieve the best outcomes.

There are many things I love about my job but the reward and joy of seeing patients who have lost their ability to do all the things we take for granted start to regain their independence again and working with a fantastic, hardworking and dedicated team who are equally passionate about helping patients to achieve the best outcomes for our patients are the things I love the most.

What’s great about working for the Trust is feeling part of the ELHT family, having supportive colleagues and managers and being part of a Trust that supports and encourages staff to continually improve patient care.



*“Even though the treatment I need has now reduced, I have never been left to fend for myself. The people involved in my care regularly check in on me to see that I am doing okay”*

**Simon Ravenscroft worked as a self-employed telecommunications engineer until suffering a stroke at the age of 55. Since then, with the help of a range of healthcare professionals from East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust, he has made remarkable progress towards being able to return to doing the things he loves to do.**

I loved my job – every day was something different. As a telecommunications engineer, I was mostly outdoors and easily completing over 10,000 steps a day.

So it came as a complete blow when one day, the morning after going to see The Killers in concert, I suddenly felt queasy and the bag I was carrying felt like it had lead weights in it. I didn't realise it at the time, but I was having a stroke.

I went straight to hospital where the next thing I remember, it was the following Tuesday. Fast forward four months and some to-ing and fro-ing between Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital and Pendle Community (Rehab) hospitals, I was finally allowed to return home.

The impact of my stroke meant that I lost my speech, I could only say one word – ‘exactly’ for the first two weeks before adding the word ‘vegetables’ to my vocabulary. I also lost use of my right arm and sensation in my right leg.

But now, following a huge amount of hard work and support from some amazing doctors, nurses and various therapists and the treatments they offer, I am now able to hold proper conversations again. Although sometimes I have to slow it down as I tend to talk too fast! I can also walk short distances and I am starting to get the use of my arm back.

There is still some way to go but I want to thank each and every person involved in my recovery. And I am determined that one day I will be fit enough to be able to go and see another concert.



**Sarah Caton has worked for the NHS for 36 years. She began her training in 1987 at the Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley School of Nursing and is now one of three Matrons in the Community Division for Clitheroe and Pendle Community Hospitals.**

I have had the most amazing career at ELHT.

While working on the gastroenterology wards at Blackburn Royal Infirmary I helped set up the original Crohns and Colitis telephone clinics which ran on a Monday evening to save patients from coming in for lengthy outpatient waits at their annual reviews. This is now a full-time clinic with its own specialist nurses.

I led the 'newly registered nurse preceptorship programme' which set up a preceptorship programme for newly registered nurses for the first year of their registration.

I've seen many changes regarding the role of a nurse. Today we have more specialist nurses now ever before and more career paths for registered nurses.

While Ward Manager for the Children's Ward at Queen's Park I saw Blackburn Royal Infirmary close and the amalgamation of the children's medical and surgical wards become one. Later, the move to the new Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital to a 51 bedded unit with three high dependency beds.

I witnessed the implementation of no smoking in hospitals - we used to have smoking day rooms off the ward for patients and colleagues!

The introduction of computers on the wards brought major improvements to communication, patient flow and accessing patient results quicker and equipment to support patient care such as electric beds, moving and handling equipment were introduced and welcomed- we used to transfer patients onto trolleys using poles!

But the one thing that hasn't changed is our ability to deliver good care to our patients.

I have always been proud to say I am a nurse and proud to say I have spent my career at ELHT and within the NHS.

*"One of my proudest moments was being introduced to the Prince and Princess of Wales and showcasing what we do within our Community Wards when they visited Clitheroe Community Hospital in 2022."*





**Paul Haworth, Biomedical Scientist in the Microbiology Department at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital is one of our longest-serving colleagues. He has worked for the NHS for a remarkable 47 years, all for ELHT in its various forms.**

My career in the NHS started in the spring of 1976, when I went to an event at what is now Pendleside Hospice and saw a film on pathology – and I was hooked!

On 19 July that year I began work as a Junior Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer – and 47 years later I'm still working in the Microbiology Department, which has been an incredible journey with so much change, improvement and memories of working with great people.

Microbiology is a department where there is a large amount of hands-on analysis, although over the years many processes have been replaced by automation and only the older scientists amongst us are aware of the old methods. The reason I particularly like my day-to-day work is because a lot of work we do is by the visual analysis of bacterial cultures, from which we make decisions on the identification of bacteria, to aid a patient's treatment.

From 1976 to 2008, I was stationed at the former Pathology Department and moved over to Burnley General Teaching Hospital. Those who know the history will be aware that this was before we became East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust and I worked for Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Health Care then. During my training I had also worked in the other disciplines of pathology until, in 2008 ELHT was established and it was decided that the Microbiology Department would be located at Royal Blackburn Teaching Hospital.

I was used as a guinea pig in liaising between Burnley and Blackburn microbiology laboratories. I think this was due to my obsession with my local football team, the Clarets, Burnley FC. The well-known football rivalry between the two towns – and main sites for the Trust – has always been fierce but it was brilliant for us as it broke down so many barriers at that time and gave us something to talk about, with some scope for friendly banter which still goes on today.

There have been many advancements over the years – particularly in health and safety. One that sticks with me is that we can no longer cook our breakfast in the hot air ovens that were used for sterilization or warm pies in the incubators that were used to grow the bacteria. Today, these activities are frowned upon with strict regulations adhered to religiously – but I have to say nothing we did in this regard ever seemed to have any lasting damage, so far as I can tell, but perhaps you had better ask my colleagues for their opinion on that!

The combination of two laboratories was a difficult time no doubt. I remember there were different cultures, different methodology and working practices and a sense of 'them and us' at times but that was the way of pathology throughout the country. Over the years people have adapted and I have met many very clever and contentious people who have embraced the changing demands that science brings us, particularly during our incredible response to COVID.

When I think back, I remember after I got the job in 1976 my dad said to me 'Do you really think you will stick it out, is it what you want?' I replied that I would give it a go and that I could always change my mind if it wasn't working out. Well, Dad, I am still here, and I hope you would have been very proud of everything I have achieved with colleagues across the NHS. I am now semi-retired and working part time, still doing the job I want to do and that's getting results that may help a patient. That is what has made me proud to work for the NHS for 47 years and perhaps for a little while longer too.

*"Over the years people have adapted and I have met many very clever and contentious people who have embraced the changing demands that science brings us, particularly during our incredible response to COVID."*



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