Meet the heroes of ESNEFT

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Also in this issue...

TIME MATTERS

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Healing garden opens

Surgery masterclasses

This issue of ESNEFT life is kindly sponsored by NHS Professionals
A new cancer centre

Work has begun on building a state-of-the-art cancer centre at Colchester Hospital to support patients through their diagnosis and treatment.

The £3.25 million project will bring together chemotherapy, haematology and radiotherapy under one roof, alongside a wellness centre to offer counselling and support services.

It follows a fundraising drive by Colchester and Ipswich Hospitals charity which has raised £2.7 million since 2014, and still needs to raise £220,000.

The new centre will be more modern, comfortable and welcoming, creating a significantly better experience for patients, their families and carers.

Kathryn Ramsey, Macmillan programme manager at Colchester Hospital, said: “We are extremely grateful for all the support from the public with the fundraising and have also worked closely with the Colchester Cancer Services User Group to ensure the design of the new unit meets the needs of our patients.

After making a £1 million donation to the campaign, a donor who wishes to remain anonymous was invited to name the new chemotherapy and haematology suite, which as a result will be known as the Collingwood Centre.

The hospital’s existing facilities in the Mary Barron Chemotherapy Suite and Collingwood Centre.

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A series of big builds at Colchester Hospital have been announced. ESNEFT life explains…

Interventional radiology and cardiac angiography unit

The development of a combined interventional radiology and cardiac angiography (IRCA) unit means patients will be treated more quickly and in a specialist environment at Colchester Hospital.

Chandra Sekharan, clinical director for diagnostic imaging at Colchester Hospital, said: “Many patients with peripheral vascular disease and other major diseases like aortic aneurysms can be treated without an open operation by using modern techniques of interventional radiology and this suite will provide an excellent place to do this. Many diagnostic investigations, such as a biopsy using ultrasound guidance, will be done here to facilitate quicker diagnosis and planning of treatments.”

On the unit will be able to carry out invasive procedures, usually involving the insertion of a needle, cannula, catheter or wire into the patient for diagnosis and/or treatment. This type of minimally invasive technique will reduce the level of risk to the patient, meaning they spend less time in hospital and can recover quicker.

Chief Executive Nick Hulme (left) with cardiology and radiology colleagues at the site of the new building.

Drugs manufacturing unit

A new drugs manufacturing unit is to be built at Colchester Hospital so patients can benefit from tailor-made medication, including chemotherapy drugs for cancer.

The aseptic unit, costing more than £3 million to build, will open next year. Deputy pharmacy production manager Stephen Pullen said: “The unit will house specialist equipment with a dedicated, skilled team, offering the most responsive, flexible and effective service to provide safe and high-quality injectables to meet our patients’ needs.”

The specially designed building will mean aseptically prepared products, for cancer chemotherapy treatment in particular, can be prepared on site, as well as a range of general intravenous preparations (IV), parenteral nutrition, radioactive injections and blood labelling for use in nuclear medicine.

Main entrance and Emergency Department

The front of the main building, which has largely stayed the same since the hospital opened in 1984, will change significantly – paving the way for an expansion of the Emergency Department (ED).

The development will take the form of two blocks. The first is single-storey and provides additional space for ED, which will include an Urgent Treatment Centre (see bottom right of page), forward-facing entrance, waiting room and consultation rooms.

The entrance and reception areas are frequently our patients’ first impression of the hospital, and it shapes their whole experience of coming to hospital at what for many is a stressful and anxious time. By increasing the space and improving the facilities in this area we aim to create a calming, safe and reassuring comfortable environment.”

The build will also include improving access for vehicles and pedestrians, and widening the narrow bridge, creating a drop-off and pick-up loop at ED, improving toilet facilities and creating a turning circle for buses.

Urgent Treatment Centres at Ipswich and Colchester

Teams at both Colchester and Ipswich hospitals are transforming the way emergency and urgent care is provided.

Both hospitals are planning to open urgent treatment centres (UTCs) and change the way their emergency departments (EDs) are run. The UTCs will create single “front doors” for each hospital. All walk-in patients will go to the UTC, and patients will only go to ED if clinicians at the UTC advise, or if ambulances bring them in.

The plan is for the Colchester UTC to be open by the end of this year, and Ipswich by the end of next year.

Go online

Find out more about these builds at www.esneft.nhs.uk

Send your items to… ESNEFT life

See back page for details
Robots making life better for patients and staff

Virtual robots have arrived at our hospitals. Digital technology experts in our IT team are working with clinical teams to introduce artificial intelligence (AI) and robotic process automation (RPA) to our computer systems. Here are two success stories about how the robots are making time matter.

Cutting down wasted appointments in Outpatients

Virtual robots are helping our teams reduce the number of wasted outpatient appointments by working behind the scenes in our electronic patient records system.

Our outpatients are sent a text message before their appointment to remind them about their hospital visit. Now, if a patient selects to cancel the appointment, virtual robots at Colchester Hospital ‘pick up’ the cancellation, search for the appointment in our electronic appointments system – just like a human would – and notify the clinic. The newly freed appointments can then be given to other patients on the waiting list so they get seen sooner.

In the first week alone, the robots helped 301 unwanted appointments be reallocated to other patients and prevented wasting more than £48,000.

Darren Atkins (pictured right) is ESNEFT’s deputy Information and Communication Technology director. He said: “Going on these early figures, over the course of a year, this process will release 34 weeks of admin staff time, offer 15,652 slots back to our patients and avoid the NHS wasting just over £2.1 million.

“If we book people in to those free slots we can lower waiting times, see more patients and clinics are more productive.”

Simon McCarthy (pictured right), ESNEFT’s operational lead for Outpatients, and Richie Clayton, senior outpatient coordinator, have been working alongside Darren’s team and technology developer Isobel George to make this latest automation ambition a reality.

Simon said: “Before, we were inaccurately recording that patients did not attend their appointments when some patients had made every attempt to cancel their appointment. “Now the robots are doing it, cancellations are being accurately recorded in the system.”

It is hoped the automation process will also be extended to Ipswich Hospital’s Outpatients department in future.

Saving medical secretaries valuable time

Our virtual robots are giving back hundreds of hours to medical secretaries so they can spend more time helping patients.

The virtual workers are handling admin-style tasks at Ipswich Hospital, including GP referrals. The robots monitor the electronic referral system and when a new one arrives, it gathers, downloads and records key clinical data.

This was previously carried out by medical secretaries who had to print out all the documents, before scanning each one – which could take between 10 and 20 minutes per referral.

Those secretaries now have more time to talk to patients and deal with their queries and it is a 24/7 process for the first time so referrals are also dealt with at weekends.

Darren Atkins said: “It’s giving time back to people to allow them to do the job they are here to do, leaving the mundane work to the robots.

Clinical Neurology medical secretary Chris Harvey (pictured above) said: “We can now be on the phones, writing letters or talking to patients, we’re more available. It gives you more time to be doing all the other things you have got to do.”

Exercise therapy for stroke patients

Did you know we offer therapy groups for stroke patients across ESNEFT?

Sessions such as Tai-Chi, craft workshops and exercise classes are held at Colchester Hospital.

Ipswich Hospital hosts upper and lower limb exercise classes and relaxation sessions.

The pictures show junior physiotherapist Rebecca Fawcett and stroke physiotherapy care assistant Sue Bycraft in therapy classes with patients at Ipswich Hospital.

Patients room busy knitting for dementia wards

Therapeutic radiographer Lara Burgess has enlisted the help of radiotherapy patients and their loved-ones to help her knit fidget quilts for patients with dementia. The activity is helping them to pass the time in the waiting room at Ipswich Hospital.

Fidget quilts are lap-size quilts made from fabrics with touch-and-feel elements sewn on – buttons, ribbon, zips and shoe laces for example. They provide comfort and distraction to patients who otherwise may spend time tugging their clothes or bedding.

Lara (pictured with the first blankets off the production line) said: “I thought it’d be a good use of time. People chat and talk in the waiting room and it’s nice to have something else to get involved with.”

Aldburgh garden helping people with dementia

A dementia-friendly sensory garden designed to help patients recover quicker has opened at Aldeburgh Hospital.

The garden, funded by the Aldeburgh League of Friends, includes an exercise area, a pavilion, giant musical instruments and scented, textured and edible plants.

Matron Michelle Fletcher (pictured right) said: “The garden is a focal point of the hospital which creates conversation and stimulation, helping our patients in their recovery and rehabilitation.”

Wifi update

The Wifi systems at Colchester and Ipswich hospitals have been upgraded so they are easier for visitors to use, and more secure. Visitors are now asked to connect to ‘NHS Free Wifi’ when they go online (rather than the old Wifi Spark option at Colchester, and IHT Public Wifi option at Ipswich).
New life-saving defibrillators arrive at Colchester Hospital

New state-of-the-art defibrillators have arrived at Colchester Hospital. The new D3 Mindray defibrillators replace the current stock which are more than a decade old. A £250,000 investment has been made in the 50 new machines. The new devices have integrated monitoring for patient carbon dioxide levels and a ‘pacing’ function to speed up patients’ heart rates when they are dangerously low. They are also wi-fi enabled to allow easy transfer of data.

Nurse Liam Horkan, head of clinical procurement for the East of England NHS Trust, said: “The new defibs are much simpler to use, more intuitive and lightweight.”

Emma Thomson, resuscitation officer at Colchester Hospital, said: “The information can be transferred wirelessly to a central station which will allow us to review the event as part of the debrief process. This information can then be stored in the patient’s clinical notes.”

“Would-be surgeons Matt Murray and Rowan Woodward have a go using some of the surgical equipment.”

Would-be surgeons Matt Murray and Rowan Woodward have been discovering what goes on in an operating theatre. A series of masterclasses at the Iceni Centre, based at the Colchester Hospital site, are giving Year 9 pupils from schools in north Essex an insight into Theatres. The students are understanding the roles of anaesthetists, anaesthetic practitioners, surgeons, surgical practitioners, theatre support workers, diagnostic radiographers and recovery nurses. The classes are also giving students careers advice on how to take the right steps into a healthcare career.

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He told the youngsters it is “hard work to become a surgeon”, but it is the “best job in the world.”

Colchester Hospital.

The real faces in theatre

Jeremy Parker, consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Colchester Hospital, is one of the clinicians taking part in the masterclasses. He said it can be difficult to recruit theatre staff because a lot of people don’t know what happens within the department. "We have to keep making the effort to encourage people to see what’s going on.”

"I would like to be a surgeon, but I’m not sure what type I want to be so that’s why it’s good to come here.”

Dr Chany Francis and Isabella Ifeadike have both been inspired to become surgeons after attending the masterclasses.

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A defibrillator is a device that gives a high energy electric shock to the heart through the chest wall to someone who is in cardiac arrest.

A new skylight provides a bright outlook on the new ward.

Reanimation officers Emma Thomson (left) and Katie Seal (right) with one of the new defibrillators at Colchester Hospital.

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Every day, in all corners of the NHS, staff go the extra mile to make a difference. At East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust we give Commendation awards to staff who do extraordinary things. Meet our award winners…

Gennine Pelayo, Resourcing assistant, HR
Moving to a new country to start a new job is a daunting prospect, but Colchester Hospital colleague Gennine makes sure the process is a happy one for our international recruits. Her mother Gene, a nurse at the hospital, travelled to the UK from their home in the Philippines in 2004. Gennine stayed at home for two years until her mother had saved enough money to bring Gennine and her younger sister to join her. Now Gennine is supporting colleagues who are in the same shoes her mother was all those years ago. Gennine goes the extra mile to ensure the new starters relocating thousands of miles from home are given a warm welcome, not only to the NHS, but to the Colchester community.

Adhip Mandal, surgeon
Adhip is a vascular surgeon who cares for patients at Colchester and Ipswich hospitals with conditions affecting their circulation, including artery and vein diseases. He is described as a ‘shining example’ in the NHS. As well as saving lives, Adhip does amazing things like bringing in clothes for a homeless amputee patient who only had the clothes he was wearing. We awarded Adhip a Commendation for his compassion and teamwork.

Michelle Chaplin, community team leader
During the snow last year, the Stowmarket Community health team showed that even extreme weather won’t stop them helping their patients. Team lead Michelle knew many of her patients lived in rural areas and cars couldn’t reach them…so she borrowed a tractor from a neighbour. Michelle collected her nursing staff from their homes and drove them round the snowy countryside to be with their patients. She also borrowed another two tractors and found volunteer drivers, and worked tirelessly to keep her staff safe and in high spirits.

Lyndsey Walker, paediatric oncology nurse specialist
Lyndsey is a nurse who cares for children with cancer and was given one of our Commendations for her commitment and kindness to families going through the toughest of times. Lyndsey was nominated for the award by the mother of a little girl Hayley (pictured right) who lost her life to cancer. Hayley’s family called on Lyndsey in their hour of need to support them as Hayley, seven, died at home.

LGBT+ team
When you look at the end of the ESNEFT rainbow, you’ll find our LGBT+ network. The team…

- supports and empowers LGBT+ staff to achieve their full potential
- creates a positive and supportive environment for LGBT+ patients. To thank them for their hard work and in recognition of what they’ve achieved, we surprised the core members with a Commendation Award.

Claire Pelling and Tracy Schofield, district nursing sisters
Claire and Tracy are part of the east Suffolk community services team which cares for people at home. We thanked them with Commendation awards for the ‘over and above’ care they gave to a patient as he peacefully died at home. Claire and Tracy were about to finish for the day when the patient’s family called and asked for their help. Understanding the family’s need for their support in the patient’s last hours, the duo decided to stay on at work. They stayed until late in the night. Claire and Tracy want to make sure the whole team receives a round of applause.

Director of Communications and Engagement Rebecca Driver surprised Claire and Tracy with their awards. New to the trust, it was her first Commendation presentation. Rebecca (right) said: “I’ve seen so many examples of outstanding commitment to patient care since joining the organisation. This is a fantastic scheme to recognise colleagues’ achievements and I look forward to many more presentations and opportunities to meet staff.”
The NHS has turned 70 years old and to capture the moment we created an East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust photograph exhibition.

Local photographer Warren Page spent a day capturing snapshots at Colchester and Ipswich hospitals and with our teams working in the local community. Here's the result – 21 photographs showing ‘Life in a Day’, which is what we called the exhibition.

The photos can be seen displayed at Colchester and Ipswich hospitals.
Meet our marathon runners

Five fundraisers have been lacing up their training shoes to prepare for April’s London Marathon in aid of our hospitals’ charity. Find out what’s inspired them...

Mandy Jordan
Mandy is head of the Colchester & Ipswich Hospitals Charity and is fundraising for the Ipswich Hospital Children’s Appeal (see panel below). She said: “No one is more surprised than I am that I’m doing it. I only started running last year with the couch to 5k program to improve my health and fitness and now I’m running a marathon!”

Andy Elms
This is Andy’s first marathon and he is running in memory of his brother Tim who died last year, aged 33. Andy (left, with Tim, right) is raising money for the Colchester Hospital Critical Care Unit as they cared for Tim. He said: “The care he received there was really exceptional and was the NHS at its absolute best.”

John Ward
John only took up running in May in a bid to lead a healthier lifestyle, but he already has 250 miles under his belt in preparation for the marathon. He said: “I’m becoming increasingly aware that it’s never too late to start.”

Joanne Hearn
Joanne secured a place in the marathon last year but was forced to defer after being diagnosed with endometriosis. She said: “The [Colchester] hospital were brilliant throughout and were all genuinely interested in finding the solution so that I could get back out running.”

Jennifer Wright
The London Marathon is just one of the endurance events mother Jennifer is taking on this year to raise money for the Ipswich Hospital Children’s Appeal. Her son Leo received treatment for a broken leg and she said: “I was so impressed by the wonderful staff. They were all very busy but treated each child with care, patience and compassion.”

Children’s Appeal 1st birthday

The Ipswich Hospital Children’s Appeal is a year old and the team is pleased to announce the total raised so far is £212,000. We need to help raise £2.5 million so the Children’s Department at the hospital can be transformed. It has not been significantly updated since the 1980s.

Supporter Tyler Webb-Harding recently raised £879 by completing a gruelling 24km SAS selection test in the Brecon Beacons. Thanks to Tyler and all our fundraisers so far.

New technique for removing build-up in coronary arteries

Patients can now be treated closer to home and more quickly after a new cardiac technique called rotablation was launched in Ipswich Hospital’s Heart Centre.

Teresa Lewis (pictured here with David Bloore, Cardiology lead at Ipswich) was the first patient to benefit from the treatment, which she would have had to travel to Papworth or Basildon hospital for previously. She said: “I think it’s brilliant. All the way through it’s been super, I was amazed how quick the whole process has been.”

The procedure involves breaking down calcium built up in a patient’s coronary arteries over time – much like limescale in your pipes at home – into microscopic fragments. It is performed through a tube in the patient’s wrist and means patients can go onto undergo stent or surgical treatment.

Dr Bloore said: “Being able to deliver it in-house reduces the waiting time and travelling times for our patients.”

Find out what happened when the Secretary of State for Health visited the Ipswich Hospital Heart Centre on page 17.

A patient thank you

A 55-year-old has thanked our staff who helped save his life and get him back on the road to recovery after he suffered a heart attack.

Neil Yeo from Halstead, was initially taken to Colchester Hospital for care before being transferred to Ipswich Hospital for further treatment, including being fitted with a stent.

Mr Yeo, who was back on his bike and cycling 8 km within four days of discharge from Ipswich Hospital, said: “Everything went like clockwork, from being admitted to Colchester to recovering on Claydon Ward in Ipswich. I will be forever indebted to the paramedic that saved my life, the staff in Colchester and Ipswich – including Dr Duncan McNab – and the gift that is modern technology.”

Prior to the merger of the two hospitals, part of Neil’s treatment would likely have been carried out at Basildon hospital and that would have probably extended his stay in hospital by one or two days.

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### Why become a member of our trust?

**Are you interested in the future of our hospitals? Have you considered becoming a member of East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust?**

More than 10,000 local people are signed up as members of our trust. Joining means you are interested in the services we provide to you and your family.

It's free, it's open to anyone living in the area who is over 16, and you can choose how involved you want to be.

Many of our members choose just to subscribe to our newsletter – Connect – which helps keep them informed about what's happening across the organisation.

Others take up opportunities to come along to meetings or take part in questionnaires when we are trying to find out what local people think on health issues.

Members are also invited to vote for the governors (see below) who formally represent the members' views to the Trust Board of Directors – they can even put themselves forward as a governor.

**Who represents you?**

We have a council of governors who represent the interests of the members and the wider public.

They are:

- **Public governors:** voted for by members and representing a geographical area (known as a constituency)
- **Staff governors:** members of staff, voted for by our staff
- **Stakeholder governors:** nominated by local organisations including councils, health watch groups and universities.

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**Colchester Public Governors**

- Christopher Hall
- Joanna Kirkner
- Michael Horley
- Paul Ellis

**Ipswich Public Governors**

- Susan Hayes
- Joanne Thain
- Ian March
- Jennifer Risett

**Rest of Essex Public Governors**

- Elizabeth Smith
- Aime Young
- Janet Braidor
- Michael Loversidge
- John Price

**Rest of Suffolk Public Governors**

- John Seal
- Joanne Thain
- Susan Hayes
- Jennifer Risett

**Colchester & Essex Staff Governors**

- Moving and handling practitioner Isaac Ferneyhough
- Midwife Donna Bostock
- Surgeon Sharmila Gupta

**Ipswich & Suffolk Staff Governors**

- Nurse Tonia Evens
- Nurse Louise Palmer
- Nurse Joanna Garrish

**Stakeholder Governors**

- Helen Chuah (Colchester Borough Council/Tendring District Council)
- Vikki Jo Scott (University of Essex/Anglia Ruskin University)
- Anthony Rollo (Suffolk Healthwatch)
- Gordon Jones (Suffolk County Council)
- Carlo Guarini (Essex County Council)
- Gillian Orves
- David Welbourn
- John Alborough

**Governors**

- Colchester Public Governors
- Ipswich Public Governors
- Rest of Essex Public Governors
- Rest of Suffolk Public Governors
- Colchester & Essex Staff Governors
- Ipswich & Suffolk Staff Governors
- Stakeholder Governors

**Interested?**

If you’re interested in becoming a member, email FTmembership@esneft.nhs.uk or call 01206 742347.

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### Students take over our hospitals

**Young people from schools in north Essex and east Suffolk took part in Takeover Challenge Day at Colchester and Ipswich hospitals.**

The national event allows youngsters to get a glimpse of hospital life, giving them access to different departments including the pathology lab and operations centre.

They were also encouraged to be innovative – using their experience of modern technology to come up with ideas that could improve the way we work.

We welcomed 70 young people to both sites, aged 14 to 19. Organiser Sarah Smith, head of nursing for Women’s and Children’s services, said:

“The young people really enjoyed meeting and talking to patients and the shadowing aspect of the day, but would like the experience to be more hands-on so we’re thinking of increasing the age to 16 and over this year.”

Youngsters were able to test out the fluoroscopy equipment in radiography at Colchester Hospital. Fluoroscopy is an imaging technique, using X-rays, which allows a physician to see the internal structure and function of a patient so that, for example, the pumping action of the heart or motion of swallowing can be watched.

“The young people really enjoyed meeting and talking to patients”

Children’s nurse Alice Nash showed students how to resuscitate a baby at Ipswich Hospital. Nursing a child is not just a question of caring for a small adult. Children have very specific health needs and our children’s nurses need to understand how a healthy child develops towards adulthood to minimise the impact of illness. This involves working closely with the parents.

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**Associate director of Logistics Andy Willis showed students the Operations Centre at Ipswich Hospital. This is the hospital equivalent of air traffic control – where teams ‘manage’ beds, making sure patients are in the right place at the right time.**

Colchester Hospital resuscitation officer Katie Seal was on hand to talk young people through CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and what to do if a person is choking. 3,500 colleagues are trained/refreshed in basic life support at the Trust every year.

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**Send your items to...ESNEFT life**

See back page for details
We want to make your time matter

We want to be the organisation where time matters. We want to remove unnecessary stress and frustration for patients and give staff time back to do their jobs.

We started a ‘Time Matters’ conversation with a week dedicated to listening to staff and patients. Here’s some of what we heard.

Our React team in Suffolk supports people at home to prevent them needing to come into hospital. They are a 24/7 team dedicated to avoiding unnecessary admissions to hospital by making sure patients receive treatment to meet their needs in their own homes, such as antibiotics and physiotherapy.

Bluebird Lodge is a community hospital in Ipswich (built on the old airport site) offering inpatient care and rehabilitation for patients who no longer need an acute hospital, but are not ready to go home.

Our community hospitals have day rooms, outside spaces and gyms to help patients get well and go home sooner.

SU student occupational therapists organised a song and dance session on Peldon Ward at Colchester Hospital.

Getting up and moving helps patients to recover quicker and get home sooner. Classics by Frank Sinatra, Elvis and Abba got everyone smiling and up and about.

Wheelchair Services team member Kevin Chatto is pictured here setting up a new manual wheelchair for Deborah Steed in Clacton so she was able to enjoy a holiday. It wasn’t possible to take her electric powered wheelchair away but Kevin’s help gave Deborah her freedom.

Other members of the Wheelchair Services team are pictured below.

Health secretary visits Ipswich team

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock MP visited the life-saving team at Ipswich Hospital’s Heart Centre. The Minister toured the £5 million specialist unit and went behind the scenes in an operating theatre to watch a heart attack patient undergoing surgery.

During his visit this month, the Minister also hosted a question and answer session with 130 members of clinical and support staff.

The Ipswich Heart Centre is home to specialist theatres for planned coronary angioplasty. This is a life-saving operation where patients at risk of a heart attack have their narrowed arteries widened.

Patient Barry Parker lives near Felixstowe and met the Secretary of State on his visit. He said: “The staff at this place are fantastic.”
Ipswich Hospital patients can now return items such as walking sticks, crutches and shower chairs to on-site recycling containers. The containers can be found at the South and Outpatients receptions as an alternative to the home collection service. It is estimated that for every five pairs of crutches issued through the NHS, only one pair is returned.

We have changed the way we describe food and fluid thicknesses for patients with swallowing difficulties. We’ve replaced ambiguous words such as ‘soft’ and ‘sloppy’ with internationally-developed scientific language. It’s to reduce the risk of choking so it’s really important, and it will help patients with conditions such as Parkinson’s and motor neurone disease, as well as stroke patients.

Activities and pastimes to help get patients up, moving and on the road to recovery are coming to Colchester Hospital. The Occupational Therapy team has been successful in applying to the Tesco Bags of Help scheme for funding – and your votes while shopping in Colchester Tesco stores can help.

Our Suffolk community midwives Jess Rowland, Lisa Larner and Nicola Heath are pictured here with one of their new bilirubinometers – a quick and easy test for jaundice can now be done at newborn babies’ homes with this portable machine, saving families a trip to Ipswich Hospital.

A dad with a dab-hand for Lego has built a mini version of a hospital scanner to help Ipswich Hospital’s child patients. MRI scanners are large, heavy and noisy so unsurprisingly lots of children get scared about having a scan. Now youngsters can play and learn from the fun working model built by Chris Johnson, father to young patient Livio – both pictured here with Livio’s mum Maria and hospital play specialist Keren Brooke. An MRI scanner is a large tube containing powerful magnets. Patients lie inside the tube during the scan.

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Young patients can now find out what it is like to have an operation at Ipswich Hospital from the comfort of their own home thanks to a new app designed to help them overcome nerves before coming in for surgery. “Little Journey” gives children and their parents or carers the chance to prepare for surgery by taking them on a virtual tour of the children’s ward, anaesthetic room and recovery area. Available for smartphones in 2D – or using a 3D virtual reality headset – it gives them the chance to meet doctor and nurse characters, see some of the equipment which will be used to care for them and find out more about what to expect on the day of their procedure.

The app aims to reduce anxiety among the 1,050 young people who have an operation at the hospital each year. Two different versions are available, with one aimed at younger children and the second at those aged eight and above.

Dr Helen Findley, consultant anaesthetist at the hospital, said: “Coming into hospital can be very frightening and overwhelming. There is evidence that if a child is very anxious and has a negative experience, it can contribute to longer-term behavioural problems as well as shaping the way they feel about hospital for the rest of their life. We hope this app will help to counteract that by showing them that coming in for an operation can be a positive experience.”

Twins Joe (left) and Ben (right) Hardy, 3, testing out the Ipswich Hospital Little Journey app and virtual reality system.

Get thinking...

Just for fun, have a go at this sudoku puzzle. If you are new to sudoku, here is what you need to do:

Simply fill in the squares with a number from 1 to 9. Every row, column and 3 x 3 box must contain only one of each number from 1 to 9. If you fulfil all three conditions and fill all the spaces, then you have succeeded.

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