

# RHN NEWS

WINTER 2019/20

Why your support  
matters



Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability

# Welcome

## Welcome to another edition of the RHN News.

In this issue, you'll see our first ever outdoor advertising campaign and see all our activities over the Christmas period.

We celebrate the success of a staff member, physiotherapist Teresa Clark, in becoming the RHN's first non-clinical prescriber. Read about the innovative work of our Speech and Language therapist, Richard Cave, and his work with patients with Motor Neurone Disease and voice banking.

We were also pleased to launch our new disability history archive service with a day long conference.

Finally, you'll read about Dan's story, a resident here at the RHN, who reminds us all why your continued support is needed.

Happy reading!

### Paul Allen

Chief Executive



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## We're online! Follow us @RHNUK



Founded in 1854, the RHN is a well-respected, national charitable hospital and research centre, providing services for adults with brain injuries. Our Putney-based community provides specialist care, therapies and innovative technologies to meet the complex needs of people with profound disabilities. We pride ourselves on caring for our patients as individuals, offering hope, as well as practical and emotional support to them and their families.

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please email [comms@rhn.org.uk](mailto:comms@rhn.org.uk)

Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, West Hill, Putney, London SW15 3SW  
020 8780 4500 [www.rhn.org.uk](http://www.rhn.org.uk)



Posters at bus shelters in Putney

## The RHN's first advertising campaign

The RHN recently launched its first ever outdoor advertising campaign in Putney, Wimbledon, Clapham and Fulham.

The advertising campaign consisted of a series of ads on local bus stops, train stations and mobile phone apps, aimed at raising awareness of the hospital and encouraging donations.

Two patients, Noah and Ruth, feature in the campaign. They generously told their stories and the many ways the RHN has been able to help them, in the hope that we inspire our local community to join our mission in supporting adults with complex brain injuries.

If you see one of our ads, take a photo and share it to social media. We'd love to see how many you can spot!

### Did you spot one of our ads?

Share a photo of our ads online and tag us on social media [@RHNUK](#).

## Christmas time at the RHN

This year, the RHN celebrated the festive season with a range of activities for patients and residents, their families, staff and the local community.

### Christmas Carol Concert

On Thursday 5 December we were joined at Holy Trinity Church in Putney by hospital staff, patients and residents, and the local community for an evening of musical performances and cheerful carols.

### Christmas Fair

Shoppers enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies, and were able to take part in a raffle and dress in their favourite Christmas jumper for the chance to win prizes.

### Staff Christmas lunch

Staff across the hospital also came together to enjoy a delicious Christmas meal, there was lots of laughter, good food and Christmas cheer!



### Putstock - Christmas show

The RHN community came together for our annual Christmas show, this year's theme was 'Putstock', and brought out the festival-goers in everyone.

There were even performances from the hospital executive team, who wowed the audience with 'We Will Rock You'.

**We look forward to doing it all again next year!**

# Celebrating the RHN's first non-medical prescriber

Physiotherapist, Teresa Clark, has recently qualified as the RHN's first non-medical prescriber.

The RHN is ground breaking in both their support of this expanded scope of practice and their willingness to develop the role.

Non-medical prescribing (NMP) is any prescribing done by a healthcare professional other than a doctor or dentist.

To qualify Teresa had to study for a post-graduate certificate in NMP and then do a period of supervised clinical practise in prescribing.

Teresa said "Physiotherapy prescribing remains a new and exciting path, with a lot of trail blazing to be done."

Many patients and residents at the RHN have spasticity after their brain injuries. Spasticity is uncontrollable muscle contractions and spasm. It can be uncomfortable, makes it difficult for people to be independent, or for others to care for them.

Teresa is the Brain Injury Service physiotherapy clinical specialist and professional lead. Clinically, she specialises in supporting people with spasticity. She had already completed masters level training to independently provide botulinum toxin injections, a drug which helps spastic muscles to relax. With this experience she realised that it would be helpful to patients if she could also prescribe the medicines that she regularly uses.

Having Teresa as a non-medical prescriber means that the RHN can try to create a more efficient service for our patients and residents. The time from when people are referred for botulinum toxin injections to receiving treatment has already reduced. Teresa keeps a comprehensive record of goal-setting and treatment outcomes, which help us to



understand treatment successes and areas where we can do better. Through the analysis of audit results, this can help improve future care and contribute to the evidence base in this specialist area.

Teresa added "I hope to generate research output and share this beyond the RHN. This will support better care for our patients and residents, other people like them and support the RHN's reputation."

## Staff recognition for work in voice banking

Richard Cave, Advanced Specialist Language Therapist, has recently been recognised for his work with Motor Neurone Disease patients and voice banking.

Patients with Motor Neurone Disease are often unable to talk within six months of diagnosis.

Voice banking allows these patients to preserve their own voices when using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), so that they are able to retain things like accent and dialect.

Richard has completed this work as part of his Masters qualification at the University College London.



# Opening up the archives

As one of the oldest medical charities in the UK, the RHN holds an important place in medical history. It pioneered the provision of long-term care for people with chronic illnesses and more recently care and treatment for people with severe brain injuries.

Two years ago the RHN archive service was established to catalogue our history. The archive traces the history of the hospital from its origins as 'The Hospital for Incurables' in 1854.

In 2019, the RHN received funding from **The National Lottery Heritage Fund** to create a sustainable public engagement programme for the new disability history archive.

The programme is funded for two years and has been designed for the local community and people living with disabilities. It aims to raise awareness of the hospital and provide insight into the lives of people with chronic or long-term illnesses over the last 165 years.



## Disability history conference

In October, the RHN hosted a disability history conference to mark the opening of the archive service.

The conference explored the Victorian conception of 'incurability' through the personal histories of people admitted into long-term care facilities, and the staff and institutions that cared for them.

Speakers included academic historians, archivists and former and current staff members.

The day ended with an exploration of the RHN archives in an artefact handling session and a guided tour of the hospital.

The conference would not have been possible without a generous grant from the Wellcome Trust-funded Surgery & Emotion project at the University of Roehampton, and the RHN staff and volunteers who helped organise, chair conference sessions and provide tours and assistance throughout the day.



# Why your support matters – Dan's story

**As a charity hospital and in order to give our patients and residents a well-rounded care experience, we offer services that you won't find at many hospitals.**

Alongside rehabilitation therapies and a bespoke wheelchair provision, we also cater for leisure activities, nurse escorts to assist trips outside of the hospital and a fund to support patients without relatives.

Most of the people we care for have the support of family and friends, but unfortunately there are a number who do not.

Dan who lives on our Coombs ward, has had his family at his side throughout his stay at the RHN, as his sister, mum and her partner visit regularly. His sister also drives to Brighton every two weeks to pick up his daughters so they can visit, which means a great deal to him and them.

The committed support of his family means everything to Dan, and makes a huge difference to his quality of life. They helped to decorate his bedroom to his liking, including hanging the model of the solar system Dan made during his sessions in the hospital art room.

With their help, Dan is able to pursue his passion for science, and is currently studying an Access course at university.

At Christmas, and on birthdays, Dan's family come in and transform one of the hospital meeting rooms into their party room, providing plenty of space for celebrations and get-togethers.

But not every patient is lucky enough to have the support of a network of family and friends, like Dan.

**“It is disheartening to see that some patients don't have anything, because their families live too far away to visit, or they have no families. The essentials like a toothbrush, deodorant, shampoo and body wash help a patient feel more like the person they were before their brain injury.**

**These small things make a huge difference to the way our patients look and feel.”**

**Laura, Ward Manager, Devonshire Ward.**

Every year we see a number of patients transferred from acute hospitals who arrive with no belongings, no family or friends to interact with, or to provide every-day necessities like toothpaste, hairbrushes, or even clothes.

In the past, our nurses have bought such items for patients with their own money, but we've launched a Patients Without Relatives Fund, which our nurses can use to provide these small home comforts for patients who are alone.

This fund, is just one of the ways we use charity donations to ensure our patients and residents maintain a good quality of life and have access to interests and hobbies they enjoy.

To find out more about the different ways you can support the RHN, please visit [www.rhn.org.uk/support-us/donate/](http://www.rhn.org.uk/support-us/donate/)

# What's on?

## Saturday 8 February

### Winter Walk Wimbledon Common

Take part in this five mile sponsored walk starting at the hospital, through the leafy trees and mosaic woodlands of Wimbledon Common before heading back for a hot roll and drink. On route you will also walk past a striking War Memorial which is inscribed with the names of local men who gave their lives for their country in World War I of 1914-1918. This scenic and beautiful walk promises to be a great day out for everyone.

## Sunday 15 March

### Hampton Court Palace Half Marathon Hampton

Starting on the front courtyard of Hampton Court Palace, and finishing in the Palace Gardens, this is a running experience not to be missed!

If you would like more details on any of our events, email [events@rhn.org.uk](mailto:events@rhn.org.uk) or call **020 8780 4565**

# Specialist training courses

## Thursday 30 January

Improving oral care for people with a neuro-disability

Apply online

## 4-5 February

Introduction to thermoplastic splinting of the upper limb in neurological conditions

Apply online

## Monday 9 March

SMART assessor training - five day intensive course

Apply online

## Tuesday 17 March

Managing Behaviours that Challenge in Brain Injured Individuals: The Positive Behaviour Support Approach

Apply online

All courses and open lectures are held at the RHN unless stated otherwise.

For further information visit [www.rhn.org.uk/events](http://www.rhn.org.uk/events)

To book a course or open lecture, call **020 8780 4500 ext 5140** or email [institute@rhn.org.uk](mailto:institute@rhn.org.uk)



Rehabilitation and long term care  
for people with profound disabilities  
caused by brain injury



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