



Dancing at The RHN with The CoDa Dance Company

As part of our commitment to a holistic approach to care, the RHN offers a range of additional therapies and services to patients and residents. This includes dance for patients on Chatsworth and Wellesley wards, delivered in partnership with CoDa, a local dance charity which specialises in dance for people with neuro-disabilities.

Supported by CoDa's team of professional dancers, and student dance volunteers from Roehampton University, patients gather in their ward day rooms to take part in guided movement and visual exercises for enjoyment and relaxation. First introduced in 2019, the weekly sessions have developed a devoted following of patients who value the opportunity to come together and express themselves through dance and movement.

Everyone is made to feel they can make a valuable contribution, irrespective of their level of mobility. Some patients will simply smile and make eye contact, whilst others will also make gentle movements with their limbs. Each session begins and ends with the session leader dancer asking patients to indicate how they are feeling through movement. Not surprisingly, the response from patients indicates increased energy and happiness levels after participation.

When the pandemic first struck in March 2020, the hospital had to make the difficult decision to suspend the dance sessions along with other group leisure activities and therapies to protect patients and residents from the risk of virus transmission. However, over the summer we reintroduced the popular weekly

sessions, adapted to virtual delivery via a live Zoom link to a small group of socially distanced patients. With restrictions on external visitors to the hospital, onsite support for patients is provided by the RHN Occupational Therapy team instead of volunteers.

As well as enabling RHN patients to continue to enjoy a much-loved activity, the virtual sessions are helping the RHN and CoDa to continue to gather evidence and feedback on the benefits of dance to people with brain injuries or illness. Whilst the most obvious difference is to emotional wellbeing, there is also growing evidence that the dance sessions are helping patients to discover cognitive and physical capabilities that they didn't know they had. We are working with University College London to design an evaluation framework to help assess the impact of the virtual sessions on patients' quality of life in a measurable way.

Jenny Porteous, RHN Occupational Therapist says:

"We have all loved having CoDa on Wellesley Ward. We have seen some wonderful participation from patients with a variety of abilities. Barriers that are often so apparent in the patients' day to day life seemed to be lowered when engaging in dance. There is always plenty of smiling and laughter from both staff and patients when CoDa are on the ward."

We are reliant on voluntary donations to continue offering dance to patients. We would like to thank The Boshier-Hinton Foundation for their generous support for the virtual dance sessions.



Meet The Red Runners

At the start of the first lockdown in March 2020 the RHN introduced various measures to limit the transmission of COVID-19 in the hospital. Our frontline staff were restricted to their wards, which meant the RHN had to find alternative ways to manage the collection of medical equipment, supplies and the provision of staff lunches. Fortunately, a group of volunteers from other departments formed to meet the challenge. Known as Red Runners, they have spent the last year walking hundreds of miles around the hospital grounds, delivering everything from COVID-19 test kits to Easter eggs. We spoke to three Red Runner volunteers to learn more about their experiences.



Isabel Barratt, Senior Legacy Development Manager

What made you decide to volunteer?

I help as a Red Runner as I want to feel useful. I know my normal job is important, but the immediate need was here in the hospital and I like to be involved.

How long have you been Red Running?

I've been doing it since it started in March 2020, and still am, although we are needed much less now as the virus is subsiding.

What have you enjoyed most about Red Running?

Getting to know the hospital itself, I have a new found love of the building and its design features and architecture. I have liked learning about the medications and medical equipment as I deliver them too. It has felt nice to get to know the clinical staff as I rarely had opportunity to work with them before. I have enjoyed keeping Sox, the hospital cat, company and getting to know the other Red Runners, who are such a lovely group of very capable people.

What has been most challenging?

Speaking to family members waiting outside the building desperate to see their loved ones, trying to settle their anxieties. Seeing patients I know being taken to intensive care. Delivering body bags to wards and knowing patients who have passed away.

Stand out moment of your volunteering.

Delivering well over 2,000 Easter eggs to all the wards and delivering hundreds of free meals to staff from local community groups, families and local residents. Their generosity and appreciation has been overwhelming.



Briar Grootveldt, Occupational Therapy Art Room Assistant

What made you decide to volunteer?

Sadly, my usual role in the art room had to stop as the it couldn't be used and the wards were in lockdown. So I decided to volunteer.

How long have you been Red Running?

I started in early December and covered the very busy Christmas and New Year period. I wear a pedometer while I'm on shift. As you can see, I did nearly 20,000 steps on Christmas Eve alone.



What have you enjoyed most about doing it?

As the hospital has been on lockdown, it's been really nice having the ability to see colleagues from different wards, even though it was only from a distance. Having only started at the RHN in September, it's also given me a great knowledge of the hospital grounds...I'm now rarely lost.

What has been most challenging?

It is physically demanding and just when you think you can sit down for one second, the phone rings! I will be forever haunted by the red runner ringtone...we had to change it at one point because everyone was triggered by it!

Stand out moment of your volunteering.

Working with such a great team. It hasn't been stress-free (by any means!) but the team has always pitched in to help each other and it really felt like everyone had each other's back. Also bumping into Sox.

Sophie Duport, Associate Director of Research

What made you decide to volunteer?

The RHN went into a zoning system on Monday 9 March 2020. That week we had a five-day course organised. We had adjusted the course to suit infection control measures and were welcoming delegates at reception, informing them about the precautions and checking that they were going to the conference room directly. As we were available at reception we naturally helped with other tasks, such as guiding visitors, and making sure staff were washing their hands, so it was natural that when needed we stepped in to help and so I became a red runner. There was not much thought involved.

How long have you been Red Running?

My first official shift as a red runner was on Thursday 12 March, 2020 although I was helping before that.

What have you enjoyed most about doing it?

The red runners are a heterogeneous mix of staff from very different teams and backgrounds, it has been created ad hoc, it is in no-one's job description and the tasks were ...well, made-up as we went along. It makes it unique. We did not exist before and will disappear when not required. We never meet as a group, yet there is a real team spirit and sense of conviviality. I've really enjoyed running with the team.

What has been most challenging?

Having to ask a nurse about four to five times to describe what equipment was required, and despite the patient and thorough explanations still being completely incapable of finding it. Losing patience and getting frustrated with my utter uselessness while the calls were piling up. In despair going to the ward to ask "show me" and then realising that the gizmo had been right in front of me all along! That has happened more than once. Not easy being an idiot.

Stand out moment of your volunteering.

Delivering Easter eggs was pretty cool.

At the Forefront of Assistive Technology: The RHN's Compass Computer Service Leads The Way with The Help of Our Supporters



When the first national lockdown was announced, Compass, the RHN's computer service, was forced to review how it operated. Normally patients would have access to computers by visiting the Compass computer room, but with movement restricted that access was very limited. However, with technology at the heart of what the team does they were in a good place to offer alternative ways for patients to continue using computers for communication, rehabilitation and leisure, although the following months were certainly not without personal and professional challenges. To find out more about how the Compass team and our patients adapted to life under lockdown, we spoke to Clinical Technologist, Jane Bache.

How long have you worked at the RHN, and how did you get your start in assistive technology?

I've worked at RHN for nearly 30 years. I started in the Occupational Therapy Department as an assistant and worked my way up through the three technical instructor grades. I was very lucky because assistive technology was very new when I joined RHN and there were lots of developments in helping disabled people to access a computer. I was immediately interested in how that technology could be used with our profoundly disabled residents and rehabilitation patients. As I learned more, my managers and the medical director at the time, really supported me and helped me develop resources in the Computer Room.

How about the rest of your team? What are their backgrounds?

I am lucky enough to have a fantastic multi-disciplinary team working with me now, having helped to develop the Compass Service over the years. I have speech and language therapists, an occupational therapist, another clinical technologist and engineer and some brilliant support workers who have moved over to Compass from nursing and physiotherapy. It is great to have team members with experience of working at RHN, as they are familiar with the needs of our residents and patients and are truly committed to RHN values.

What therapies and services are provided by the Compass team?

Compass provides services for internal patients and residents based in the Computer Room. We have a wide variety of resources at our disposal and continue to try and keep up to date with the latest technologies, to help our therapy teams with the assessment and treatment of patients. When used creatively, computers are excellent tools for rehabilitation but also

can offer access to leisure activities for residents whose participation is limited by their physical and cognitive disabilities.

On the wards, Compass is also able to provide loan equipment for those developing their communication skills and for those who need specialist equipment to help them control their environment. This loan equipment is funded by the RHN and maintained by Compass so that some of our time is spent helping with equipment setup and repair on the wards.



How has the COVID-19 pandemic effected the work of your department?

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on our ability to work with our patients, in that the Computer Room has either been fully closed or has had severe restrictions on the numbers of patients allowed to attend. The team have managed this well by liaising with the infection control and ward teams, although it has been a stressful time. There has been a need to change working routines by sending equipment to wards, offering remote sessions to support therapists and by being based in therapy hubs to continue patient sessions where appropriate.

RHN lockdown has meant more working from home to limit numbers in the office, so an on-site rota was created. Time off-site has also been used to develop new assessment resources and create training resources for both our external local therapists and RHN therapists and nurses.

What difference does the support of donors make to your department?

Offering technology for rehabilitation and leisure inside RHN is funded by our supporters, so donations are hugely important. If a resident needs to borrow a communication aid for assessment or wants to control their own TV with a switch, there is often no statutory funding for this until they have proved their ability to use it. So equipment and the skilled staff to manage it all needs to be funded through donations. With developments in technology moving so fast, it is incredibly important that we keep building our resources and contributing to new developments. The RHN is one of the only rehabilitation facilities or residential settings to have an on-site assistive technology service, which is of great benefit to our patients, many of whom rely on technology to improve their quality of life and enable their independence. It also provides our therapy teams with innovative ways to work, and engage, with patients.

The Compass Computer Room is one of the most popular services we offer to our patients. The games and activities our therapists use are fun and challenging and provide our patients with a real sense of their own recovery. Access to technology also allows patients and residents to stay in touch with the outside world, which has proven vital during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Every year we have to raise £80,000 to offer this vital facility to our patients. The time they spend in the Compass Computer Room not only equips them with the skills they will need when they return home, it's also a chance for them to have fun, maintain their independence and celebrate their achievements.

A Year in The Archives

with RHN Archivist Chris Olver

In July 2019, the RHN began a two-year heritage project to create a sustainable public engagement programme for the RHN's new disability history archive. This project was supported by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The project's aim is to open up and share our rich history with the wider community, through a programme of conservation, cataloguing, digitisation and outreach events. The project will provide first time access to the historical records of the hospital to the RHN supporter community and the local area.

Although some of the work was delayed due to the first national lockdown, our team of archivists and conservation volunteers have made great progress in cleaning, cataloguing and digitising the RHN's archive of historical records.

Starting with conservation efforts, the volunteers were involved in cleaning archive records to remove the visible dust on archive material. It may surprise you to know that dust is a harmful substance which accelerates the deterioration of paper documents. While surface dust can be removed with light dusting with an animal hair paintbrush, for more engrained dust it is necessary to use a smoke sponge, made of vulcanised rubber. This usually did the trick, though some items within the collection required cleaning by professional conservators, who would use a vacuum cleaner with HEPA filtration.



There were a number of items that required even more specialised conservation and repair work. This work was due to begin in April 2020 but due to the first UK national lockdown it was not possible for conservation to begin until August 2020.



Items sent for conservation included the 17 volumes of hospital admission casebooks. These green, bound vellum volumes contained records of all applicants to the charity from 1854 to 1968. The volumes are a fantastic resource for academic and family historians as they provide personal information about each applicant such as name, date of birth, where they are from and medical conditions as well as further details if they were admitted, such as the type of patient they qualified as, how they were financially supported and the length of their occupancy. The conservators repaired the stitching on these volumes to secure the text block to the cover material, as well as repairing cracks and tears to the vellum covers and giving each volume a thorough cleaning.

The items requiring the most work were the four medical case books which contained medical case notes of former patients of the hospital dating from the early twentieth century. The case books are rare examples of clinical details of how our early patients were medically cared for once they arrived at the hospital. They also contain the patients' medical histories and in one volume even includes photographs of some of these early patients.



Thanks to the repackaging and cleaning work done by our volunteers, it was possible to devote more time to cataloguing the archive collection. The first national lockdown delayed this work until June, but fortunately our IT team were able to install the online catalogue remotely in the meantime. The current online catalogue only shows a small selection of the overall catalogue and more records will be added in the coming months. This will include item level descriptions for some of the digitised individual photographic material, once they have been watermarked and uploaded.

The work of our conservation team has uncovered some fascinating parts of the collection, such as the House Committee minutes which are a treasure trove of interesting little facts about daily life in the Hospital, including the animals who once lived on the hospital farm. The minutes would also occasionally discuss medical treatment of patients. An example from 1930, shows the House Committee considering a patient's request to travel to Germany to receive experimental treatment (which turned out to be a quack remedy involving an 'electric wand' for his muscular dystrophy). In the letter the Hospital Secretary informs the patient that he has asked the Hospital's medical consultant, Sir Farquhar Buzzard, who was also the King's Physician, who promptly denied the request.



Sadly, due to the pandemic, some aspects of the heritage project such as school workshops were unable to go ahead on schedule. Fortunately, thanks to the ability of our volunteers to work remotely, the first half of 2021 will see work begin on an internal project, engaging patients and residents with the history of the RHN through art therapy sessions. The art created in these sessions will eventually form part of a planned summer exhibition, which will be held in the RHN's grounds. The conservation team are very grateful to the National Lottery Heritage Fund who have been very understanding of the need to work around the restrictions faced by staff and volunteers, and agreed to the changes that had to be made.

If you would like more information on becoming an archive volunteer, or you would like to know more about accessing the archive's online content please contact our archivist, Chris Olver at colver@rhn.org.uk or visit <https://www.rhn.org.uk/about/heritage>



Lavender Remembrance Fund

Below are the names of past patients, volunteers and staff at the RHN, whose loved ones have chosen to set up a tribute fund and plant a lavender bush in their memory. The tribute lavender beds can be found in the RHN gardens. Please feel free to visit the hospital and take a look.

Adeh Murray Sellar

Anne Prosser

Antony Olley

Avis June Smith

Barbara Garnham

Barbara Kelly

Catherine Ann Fitzgerald

Christopher Bedford

David Driver

David John Fincham

David John Gillett

David Richard Perry

Diana Merrick

Edith Kitty Roper

Eileen Dorothy Barrett

Eileen McKay

France-Raoul Chateau

Ghulam Sarwar

Graham Boiling

Graham Phillips

Henry John Old

Hugh Munro

James Pirie

Jean Ann Stowe

Kamaljit Toor

Lesley Jean Hyams

Lucy Jane Denniston

Margaret Deller

Mark Goodfellow

Marvin Couson

Maud Riley

Maureen Lesley O'Brien

Megan Paton

Michael Brooklehurst

Michael Lindsay

Neale Gordon-Wilson

Omar Hayat Shaikh

Patricia Burston

Paul Loft

Peggy Stannard

Peter Gow

Peter John Davies

Peter Newton

Roger Smith

Rosemary Ann Shurrock

Sean Hamilton

Shirley Gill

Stephen John Mitchell

Stuart - Copping

Taranjit Kaur Chadha

Ted & Gladys Black

Trevor George Kingham

Ved & Helena Aggarwal

Winifred Warwick-Mayo

Lavender Funds are a way of celebrating the life of a loved one while helping others in need of our specialist care and support. After setting up a fund you will also have the opportunity to plant a special memorial lavender in our peaceful garden.

For more information please contact Isabel Barrett in Fundraising on 020 8780 4557 or at ibarrett@rhn.org.uk

Chaplain's Corner



RHN Chaplain, Geoff Coyne

Many people love films about those fictional characters with superpowers. Unlike skills that are learned through traditional means, the superpower skills are strengths and abilities that arise from, amongst other things, random accidents or exposure to strange phenomena. Often the superpowers are used for good, standing up for what is right, dealing with external threats and therefore making a change, a difference to the world.

Do we ever wish we had a superpower? Well we do. It's the ability to do a kindness to others and that can so often change their world.

Coronavirus, the lockdowns, the uncertainties about the future have often, in the past year, left us feeling that we want to avoid life and hibernate. But, of course, we can't and so we have struggled on. But in our struggles people have reached out to us with acts of kindness and care and in doing so have changed our day or our perspective. Those acts have given us hope, help, joy, assurance.

As I write this I know we are nearly out of lockdown and by the time you read this we will be even nearer unlocking. And when things get back to "normal" or the new "normal", let's not forget we have a superpower and let's continue to make a difference to people's lives with acts of kindness.

Support the RHN Through Payroll Giving

Payroll giving was introduced by the UK government in 1987, as a tax-free way for earners to donate to a registered charity of their choice.

The RHN currently has around 90 payroll givers supporting our patients through the scheme, but we would love to have many more.

Payroll giving helps us to invest in key equipment and services, and having a regular source of donations means we can plan for the future. If you would like to join our payroll giving supporters, here's a helpful guide.

Getting started

Get in contact with us to receive our payroll giving form and decide how much you would like to pledge each payday.

If your organisation is not part of a payroll giving scheme, they will need to register with an official payroll giving agency, such as Charitable Giving.

How does it work?

A £10.00 pledge would only cost a standard rate tax payer £8.00 and a higher rate tax payer just £6.00. Payroll Giving donations are deducted before tax, so we receive more money at no extra cost to you, which would usually go to the HM Revenue & Customs- so your gift could be worth up to 40% more. There is no minimum or maximum amount and you have complete control of when you start and stop giving.

What's next?

Once you've submitted your form you can relax and we will take care of the rest. That's one of the great things about this scheme, it's very easy.

How does Payroll Giving benefit the employer?

Payroll giving is an attractive scheme to add into your employee benefits package. It promotes engagement and a sense of pride from staff knowing their organisation is helping them give something back. It is also an excellent addition to an organisation's corporate social responsibility programme.

Get in touch with us at corporate@rhn.org.uk to start the process today, or if you have any questions.



Support the RHN with Amazon Smile

If you like to shop on Amazon, you can now support the RHN by signing up to Amazon Smile. Just go to <http://smile.amazon.co.uk> and search for the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability in their list of supported charities. Once you've signed up, remember to access Amazon via the Smile page, and for every purchase you make a small donation will wing its way to the hospital.



Already love Amazon? How about using [AmazonSmile](#)? The same great Amazon you love but with .05% of the profits being automatically donated to us!

Dates for your diary

London 2 Brighton Challenge 29 May

2,000 adventurers of all experience levels & ages will take on a classic capital to coast route, testing their grit over the Bank Holiday weekend. Most will walk, but many will jog or run the full 100km, and with half & quarter distance options, there's a challenge for everyone. A Richmond start by the Thames – then the North Downs and wonderful Surrey & Sussex countryside to halfway at Turners Hill. The 100km route heads up and over the South Downs before the welcome sight of the Brighton coastline comes in to view.



Cotswold's Way Challenge 27 June

The magical Cotswold Way provides a stunning setting for a testing challenge - with some fantastic views en route and tough hills in between. It's a Saturday morning start from historic Cirencester, as 2,000 adventurers set out on 100km looped route of footpaths & trails – most walking but many jogging and running. Whether you're a keen walker and new to endurance events, or a seasoned hiker up for a new adventure - with half and quarter distance options - there's a challenge here for everyone. You'll get full support & hospitality all the way to your finish line - where an amazing sense of achievement & celebration awaits.



Virtual London Marathon 3 October

Join Team RHN and 50,000 other runners and be part of the biggest marathon ever with 50,000 others running the official London Marathon route. It's your run, your way, so you get to choose your 26.2 mile route.

Registration fee is £20 with a fundraising target of £300. Receive an RHN vest and goody bag, as well as an official London Marathon finisher medal and t-shirt. We have limited spaces, so don't leave it too late!



If you would like further information on any of these events then please visit www.rhn.org.uk or contact the events team by email events@rhn.org.uk or call us on 020 8780 4560.

Follow us: [@twitter.com/rhnuk](https://twitter.com/rhnuk) [@facebook.com/rhnuk](https://facebook.com/rhnuk) [@instagram.com/rhnuk](https://instagram.com/rhnuk)

Please click [here](#) if you'd like to support
The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability's Compass Service.

- £25 would buy a simple switch allowing patients to access a range of technologies
- £50 would pay for a single therapy session in the computer room
- £100 will provide a flexible stand, allowing computer monitors to be adjusted for disabled users
- £ _____ my preferred amount today!



giftaid it Don't forget to let us know whether or not you're a UK tax payer.
We can reclaim the tax on your donation and any future donations, to make
your donation 25% more, at no cost to you!

**Thank you for
your support!**

Donate online: www.rhn.org.uk/online-donation / Or call: 020 8780 4568

You can also donate by post, sending your gift to: **Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, FREEPOST, London SW15 3SW**. Using a stamp will save RHN money. When sending a donation by post, we would appreciate it if you could include your address and email details so that we can continue to keep you updated on our work.

You can change the way we contact you or stop our communication to you by calling **020 8780 4568** or emailing fundraising@rhn.org.uk
If this project is fully funded by the time we receive your donation, your gift will be used for the general benefit of patients at the RHN.