



Cumbria, Northumberland,
Tyne and Wear
NHS Foundation Trust

Staff and Volunteer Long Service Awards 2023



Caring | Discovering | Growing | **Together**

Welcome

Welcome to our staff and volunteer long service awards commemorative brochure.

Each year we celebrate the long service of our staff and volunteers. Staff who have reached 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 and 50 years of NHS service and volunteers who have reached 5, 10, 15 or 20 years of service, will receive a gift, pin badge and certificate.

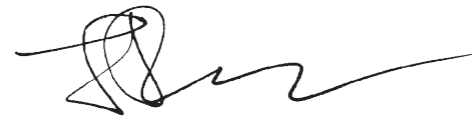
We are delighted to introduce the 2023 brochure, which showcases the wonderful stories of our talented and dedicated staff and volunteers. You will find personal and touching stories for staff and volunteers who have reached long service milestones.

The NHS' most valuable assets are our staff and volunteers. Together, you show dedication and commitment each and every day and make a difference to those who need us.

We hope that you enjoy reading these stories and we dedicate this brochure to all our staff and volunteers for your continued service.



Ken Jarrold CBE
Chair



James Duncan
Chief Executive

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50+ years

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40+ years

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Volunteers

5+ years

Mary Gair
Jamie McKenna

30+ years

Jon Gair
Tracey Sopp
Jill Stewart

25+ years

Andrea Cox
Lindsay Hamberg
Eric Rothwell



Eileen Eve

Eileen Eve works as a Community Practitioner in the Older Peoples Community Mental Health Team in North Cumbria. Eileen is our longest serving member of staff, having worked in the NHS for 50 years!

Eileen was drawn to working in healthcare as many of the people around her were employed at local hospitals. She originally applied to undertake her general nursing training at the large Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle, but at the time the hospital was inundated with applications. Eileen explains, "When I applied and went to my interview, at that time they had too many applicants! So they were only taking the people that were nearer 18 years old, but I wasn't even 17 at the time, and so they said I should go to the college for a year and then reapply. But I didn't want to do that. I wanted to start work in the NHS straight away."

"So I applied to The Garlands hospital, local to me, because my mum had worked there; in fact where I lived a

lot of people worked there, it was like a little community working there at The Garlands. So I applied there and I thought, I'll go there for the year and then I'll apply back at the Infirmary to do my general nursing. But it didn't happen - I stayed where I was, and never looked back!"

The Garlands Hospital was a mental health hospital which had originally opened as the Cumberland and Westmorland Lunatic Asylum in January 1862 and joined the National Health Service as Garlands Hospital in 1948.

"Even when I started there it was still very much institutionalised," Eileen points out. "There were over a thousand patients, and they all went to work every day within the hospital. In fact my first job was looking after patients in the sewing room - I thought, I'm supposed to be nursing, why am I in a sewing room?"

"You sometimes had 30 patients to a ward, but only three staff to look after them all - not like today, where you have much more time with patients to provide individual care. But from the beginning I liked working with the elderly, looking after them, making sure they were fed and comfortable, and just generally supporting them."

"I worked on various elderly wards, including what we called the long-stay wards. There were patients there who had been in the hospital since after the war in the 1950s. Most of them had no family, so we become their family. We had some good times going on trips and taking them on holiday. All throughout the rest of my career I've been focussed

on elderly care; I like working with the older generation."

After the introduction of 'Care in the Community' policies in the early 1980s, which focussed on shifting treatment and care of disabled and mentally ill people to their own homes rather than large and long-stay institutions, the Garlands Hospital began to wind down (eventually closing in March 1999).

When Care in the Community was introduced, the elderly care ward Eileen was on at The Garlands closed and those patients were moved out to live in the community, and she went to work at day centres that were set up to support them across Brampton, Wigton and Carlisle. These were drop-in centres where those who were being cared for in the community with mental illnesses could come to socialise and receive treatment.

From there she moved to nursing in the community, supporting those patients out in their own homes.

Eileen has seen some really dramatic shifts in how mental health care is provided. "Now it's changing and improving all the time," she explains, "and the team I work for strive all the time for further changes to keep making things better for people."

"Patients are looked at as individuals, now, rather than all being treated the same as they were years ago - when I first started nursing the patients had nothing personal, everybody wore the same dress, the same pyjamas. Things like dementia weren't even really mentioned or understood back when I began nursing."

Nonetheless, over the years working with elderly people in hospital and in the community, Eileen gained a wealth of experience of working with people with dementia.

Now Eileen is working in the Memory and Later life Service at CNTW. "I specifically see patients who are on our Vascular Pathway, which means that I and my two colleagues take on any referrals that come in for people who've been recently diagnosed with vascular dementia (caused by reduced blood flow to the brain, which damages and eventually kills brain cells) or dementia in people with Parkinson's disease." Eileen was part of the small team who originally set up this specialist pathway.

"I visit them in their local community, to support them and their families. Sometimes you go and people are struggling, and you come away thinking, 'I've just left them in the same situation', but they're always pleased that you've been and talked to them. I think that's the important thing for them, knowing there's somebody there, that they're not alone."

"We've got what I would call an open door policy; families can call anytime for support, and we'll sort it out. Especially throughout this pandemic, it's been a real comfort to people, knowing that they could get hold of us if need be."

In the first lockdown of the Covid-19 pandemic the team had to stop doing home visits, but with full PPE and safety precautions they were later able to go back to supporting people in-person. This has been really important to Eileen and the people she supports: "As [the



first lockdown] lifted and we went into people's homes again, we found that because they've had that time with no outside contact, being stuck in 24/7, both the people with dementia and their carers really struggled."

Eileen adds, "I think the biggest changes I've seen over my nursing career is that we now focus on trying to keep people at home as long as possible. For carers, that can be really hard because they've got them 24/7, but it's also much nicer to see them in their own home, in their own surroundings.

"Obviously there comes a time when some need to go into care, and some need specialist mental health care in hospital. That can be quite sad really, when it comes to that, but it's just the nature of the disease - it's an awful disease. When a couple have been married 60 years and their husband doesn't recognise them or the wife doesn't recognise them? Or when somebody that's never been aggressive is aggressive towards their partner? Yeah, that can be tough.

With a job that can take such an emotional toll, it's really important to stick together as a team and support each other. Eileen definitely feels this is the key to her success: "I have a very supportive team. If you've had a bad day or some situation has arisen, you can go back to the team and there is always somebody you can bounce ideas off, always somebody who will help you out. That supportiveness is the key thing. I would like to think that somebody would happily phone me for help, and know that I'd be willing to help them, and our whole team is like that.

We asked Eileen what she'd say to someone at the start of their career, looking to join the NHS or to go into working with the elderly. "Well, I would say get some experience first before you go and do your training. Some people go straight on to do the training for three years and then find out it's not for them. Get some experience in a caring role, in a care home for example. This kind of role, if you're not 100% about wanting to care for people, it's not a job you can do really, because you've got to be focussed on it - it can be very full-on.

Asked what the best part of her job is, Eileen says it's simple: "I just like caring for people! And I've met some lovely people. Over the years I've worked with a lot of nice people and made lot of lifelong friends. And relatives and carers of people I've supported will often stop and speak to me when I'm out shopping or whatever. I still get the odd Christmas card off some relatives! So it really makes the job worthwhile, knowing that they appreciate what you do."

Although she's served the NHS for 50 years, Eileen isn't in a hurry to move on and she wants to make sure it's on her own terms. "I had planned to retire a couple of years ago, but I had to take time off work due to having breast cancer. So then I carried on for a while. I didn't want to finish because of the cancer; I wanted to finish when I wanted to finish!"

"Then, although I'd planned to retire in 2020, when the pandemic hit the country I decided I had to stay on. I'm really glad I did. It was important to help out and do my bit of course, but also it meant I had something I really like to do, to keep me going through the week!"



Paul Courtney

Paul got his start at the school of nursing at St Mary's Hospital in Stanington. "Back in the 1980's, it was more like an apprenticeship model, you were an employee of the hospital rather than going to train at a university."

He was following in his mum's footsteps, who was a nurse at St Mary's. "After I left school, I wasn't quite sure what to do with my life and I think my mum kind of pressed me a little bit! She said, 'look, why don't you come and work in the hospital and give it a try.' So I did, and I never really looked back from there!"

St Mary's Hospital was a large psychiatric institution, built in the latter part of the Victorian era, and closed in 1996. "When I first started, there were a lot of long-term wards. Some people had been there for many, many years, some since the Second World War." There were acute care wards at the hospital, but over time Paul says he gravitated more towards the rehabilitation of the longer term patients.

Since qualifying in 1985, Paul has been with our Trust - in its various guises - ever since. He spent much of the early part of his career in Gateshead, and went on to work across North Tyneside, Sunderland, and more recently up in Northumberland.

After working in the wards for a long time, Paul describes being appointed as a Community Psychiatric Nurse as his 'big break'. "I really enjoyed that; moving from the wards to the community, that was sort of the making of me."

Paul has seen many changes over his 40 years in mental health nursing. "I think the biggest change I've seen, which has happened over a long period of time, is that the demand from the public has greatly increased, and expectations are greatly increased as well.

"I think it's because there's a greater awareness in society about mental health and what it means. People are much more savvy about what the conditions are, what the treatments are, and their expectations of services. The demand has shot up.

"But also, in response to that, there's been a lot of advances, not just in medications but in many therapies. So the range of treatments available is much wider."

Paul has held a lot of jobs with the Trust, but always preferred to be more clinically focused. Eight years ago, he became a nurse consultant, which is a senior clinical nursing role within the Trust.

Paul retired from working full-time in 2019, but after a short break returned part-time. He's now based at Greenacres, with the Community Mental Health Team in Northumberland. "I very much like being here," he says; "I like the people I work with, the teams, but obviously I like the job as well. And I think that Nurse Consultant role is probably where I will always stay, for the rest of my career."

Reflecting on the role, Paul says, "Probably the best part of the job is working with service users, thinking about how we can best support them to help them recover from whatever problems they are experiencing.

"I'm also a Multi Professional Approved Clinician, so I work with people who are impacted by the Mental Health Act. That is probably the more challenging part of my role. When people have been discharged back into the community but are still subject to the Mental Health Act, it can be very difficult having to say to people, 'you're not doing too well, and we need you need to come back to hospital'. People don't like that, and I understand that. We're trying to work with them and their best interests, but they don't see it like that at the time! But we're trying to get people back on the path of recovery, so they can lead independent lives in the community - that's always what we're aiming for.

"My advice to anyone who's early in their career would be, find something that you're interested in and explore that. Whether that's a particular therapy, working with a particular group of service users, etc. And try

and get some broader experience in different areas, different wards, work with different people.

"CNTW is a fantastic organisation. There's lots of opportunities; you can come in at a junior level, and really the world's your oyster. It doesn't matter where you're coming from, nursing, or team admin, or HR - there's opportunities. I think that's one of the bonuses of working in a very big organisation. We have the infrastructure, the support and the training which I think a lot of smaller organisations struggle to achieve.

"And I think it's one of the great things about the nursing profession, that when you reach a certain level, you also have a choice - do you want to stay clinically focussed? Do you want to go into operational management, or education, or research, and so on? We've got good career structures for people now, but I think younger nurses do need encouragement and support to take on those more senior roles.

"I think for me, being a Nurse Consultant is sort of the pinnacle of a clinical nurse's career. That's where I wanted to end up, and that's where I ended up, and I'm very happy with that!"



Gary O'Hare

Chief Nurse Gary O'Hare has worked at CNTW since 1982, although he never expected to become a nurse.

An injury after Gary left school ended his dreams of becoming a footballer. Instead, he undertook a bricklaying apprenticeship but struggled to find work. A family friend who worked at St George's Park Hospital, Morpeth suggested a career in mental health nursing. Gary says: "to be honest, it was probably the furthest thing from my mind." Despite this, he took up a role as a support worker and says: "From the first day I really took to it and couldn't believe what a phenomenal, fantastic job it was looking after and supporting people at times of real need and distress."

After six months as a support worker, Gary became a pupil nurse with a focus on bedside nursing and later completed a conversion course to become a registered mental health nurse. Gary says his "career opportunities really started to open up" after becoming a registered nurse.

During his career, he progressed from a charge nurse on an intensive care ward to eventually becoming a Director of Nursing and Chief Operating for CNTW. Gary also spent four years on secondment to the Department of Health advising ministers and senior civil servants on a national programme for reducing violent restraint.

Gary says: "The best part of the job for me, when I was a practicing clinician, was supporting people in really very distressed, emotional states and working with and alongside them then seeing them get better and reach a point where they could be discharged from hospital and live a normal life."

"For me, that is without a doubt the most rewarding thing I'll ever come across."

As well as supporting people to get better, Gary says the people he has met and worked with are also one of the best parts of his job. "I've been so privileged to work with so many great nurses, managers, doctors and others across the organisation who have all come together to do the best for their patient."

"They're generally good decent people who like a laugh and a joke. It's a very serious job we do, but there is a place for appropriate humour and it does make life a lot easier and the day go much quicker."

Another highlight of Gary's career is winning a Gold Medal Lifetime Achievement Award from the Chief Nursing Officer. Gary says it was a "real privilege" to win this rare national award. He's also "really proud" that CNTW was graded 'outstanding' twice by the CQC during his time as a director.

When asked about the hardest part of his job, Gary says: "Without a doubt when we let people down, patients in particular, especially when someone loses their life."

Reflecting on his career, Gary says joining CNTW was the best choice he has ever made; "It's been an absolute phenomenal 40 years and it just seems like it has only been a few years since I started."

"I'd say to anyone coming into the NHS that mental health and supporting people with learning disabilities is the place to be. There isn't a better place and there isn't a more rewarding place to work. And I'm very grateful to CNTW and the NHS for the chances it's given me."

Gary has seen huge changes over the course of his career, particularly in patient care. He explains that patients are treated with more dignity and compassion and also that there is greater focus on their quality of life.

Looking ahead, Gary plans to retire again in 2023, having already retired and returned to work in 2021. He is looking forward to spending time with his wife, who he met through work and "very quickly married" back in 1991, and their two dogs. However, he hasn't ruled out returning to work in some capacity!





Margaret Kelly

Margaret Kelly, Service Assistant, has been working for the Catering Department at CNTW for 40 years.

Margaret's mam, also called Margaret, worked in the main kitchen as a cook at Newcastle General Hospital (now CAV) and got her a job on a three month contract. Back in the 1980s, there were 56 wards on the site which incorporated not only mental health services, but also other specialities including maternity and day units, so there was a lot of meals to be made!

The changes in how hospital meals are provided now compared to then stands out to Margaret as she remembers when everything used to be cooked fresh from scratch on a daily basis whereas now there is a greater reliance on pre-prepared frozen food.

Over her many years of service, Margaret has continued to work on the same hospital site and has worked numerous Christmas Days.

She says there is always a really good atmosphere amongst the catering team and everyone "is really happy and excited." Margaret says she feels that it's really important that any patients staying in hospital over Christmas get to enjoy a full three course Christmas dinner, just the same as everyone else.

During her career, Margaret says she has "worked with some amazing people and had good managers and supervisors." She says she "would recommend the job to anyone."

When asked about the most challenging part of her job, Margaret's only complaint is finishing at 6pm as she'd rather start work earlier and finish earlier!

Looking to the future, Margaret says she has no plans to retire yet - "I love my job." When she does decide to retire, she is looking forward to spending time with her daughter who has recently graduated in general nursing and hopes to work in A&E.



Alison Belshaw

Administration Manager Alison Benshaw started her career as an Admin Assistant at Houghton Health Centre in November 1986.

Alison was responsible for covering reception, answering the switchboard and supporting nurses in the Child Health clinics and Family Planning clinic as well as School and District Nurses. She says: "I loved my job as it was so varied and I loved working with the public."

Alison worked at Houghton Health Centre until 2002 when she applied for an admin role within the Community Addiction Team, based on Norfolk Street in Sunderland. Alison was "quite nervous" at first as she had never worked in a mental health service before. However, once she got started she found that service users were very respectful once they got to know her and just wanted help and support. Alison says: "I loved the role and felt as though I was part of the team helping the service users with their addictions."

Whilst working within the Community Addiction Team, Alison was promoted to Office Manager but unfortunately the service was decommissioned in 2007. She knew she wanted to continue working for CNTW and was matched to a Personal Secretary/Team lead role working for the Community Clinical Managers at Cherry Knowle Hospital. Alison says: "This role was very challenging as I had never worked as a secretary before, but I thrived in this role and found job satisfaction."

In June 2014, Community Services in Sunderland went through a service transformation and a new Principal Community Pathway was set up to implement new, evidence-based community pathways for adults and older people. Alison expressed an interest in being involved in this transformation as she thought being part of the first team to go through this process was an exciting opportunity. Alison was appointed as a Pathway Coordinator within the Sunderland North Team.

"I didn't know what I had let myself in for when I first started as there were no admin processes in place and everything was new," Alison says. Along with a fellow Pathway Coordinator, Alison set up all the new admin processes within the team, which the other services followed after a few months.

Alison says: "This was my greatest achievement and I was very proud to say the North Team were the first."

In 2019, Alison became an Admin Team Lead supporting the admin staff within the Adult Community Teams. Two years later, she took up her current role as an Admin Manager within the South CBU. Alison says: "Every day is different and challenging, but it keeps me on my toes."

Alison has seen lots of changes during her long NHS career, including the impact of Covid-19 which forced admin teams to work from home. She says: "CNTW is focused on supporting its staff more than ever. Staff within our Trust are very supportive and teamwork-based."

After 35 years of service, Alison remains committed to CNTW. She says: "I look forward to spending the rest of my working life within the Trust until I retire."





Julie Burns

Information Governance and Compliance Lead Julie Burns has worked in the NHS for 35 years.

She began her NHS career at the age of 17. Julie was planning to start an apprenticeship with Northumbria Police but there was no guaranteed job at the end of her training, so she jumped at the chance to join the NHS when she heard that the Finance team at Northumberland Health Authority was hiring.

Julie's first job was a Clerical Officer in the Accounts Payable finance team. From this point, she began her accountancy training, moving to other financial roles through promotion. Working on the Northgate and Prudhoe Hospital sites had a significant impact on Julie. "I really enjoyed meeting some interesting and fun characters whilst working and communicating with patients and staff on those sites. This did influence my future career decisions."

Applying for a new role, created in 1998, as a Medical Records Manager covering Northgate and Prudhoe changed the course of Julie's career.

Through this role, Julie became more interested in Information Governance as her job involved ensuring patient information was held securely. An Information Governance team was formed in 2005, Julie joined the team in 2008 as an Information Governance Manager. The focus of her role is to provide support, guidance, and training to staff within the Trust to ensure adherence to legislative requirements, national guidance and regulatory obligations in the handling of person identifiable and corporate information. To support this Julie, has undertaken various training and qualifications in relevant legislation.

The digitalisation of the way information is recorded, processed, accessed, and stored is the biggest change Julie has seen over the course of her career. From manually writing cheques, reconciling paper invoices/orders to Bacs payments and electronic finance systems. More importantly, moving away from the use of paper health records to all clinical information and contacts being held on an electronic health record. Julie says: "A clinician being able to log into a system and be able to access information at their fingertips is a massive improvement in providing effective patient care."

However, the introduction of new technologies has made Julie's role more challenging in terms of ensuring the confidentiality and security of information held electronically. The hardest part of her job is investigating

Information Governance incidents and breaches of confidentiality, establishing the root causes, and ensuring actions are in place to minimise recurrence.

Julie also witnessed significant changes to the Trust during the Covid-19 pandemic. She says: "No one expected or was prepared for the impact but everyone within the Trust reacted positively." Julie appreciated the support for staff wellbeing and the introduction of new technology to help staff communicate remotely.

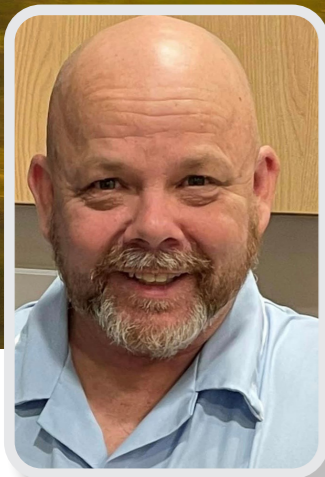
Interacting with staff and helping them keep

personal information safe is one of the highlights of Julie's job. She enjoys providing advice and guidance to staff as well as running Information Governance training sessions.

Julie advises anyone considering a career in the NHS to "Go for it and take the opportunities given to learn as much as they can."

Julie hopes to retire in five years but until then she wants to continue providing the best support and guidance she can, as well as pass her experience and knowledge on to other staff within the team.





Peter Haddow

Peter Haddow has been a Nursing Assistant at CNTW for 35 years, but as a child he always wanted to be a jockey.

It was chatting to his Nana about her job as a nurse that made Peter want to work in healthcare rather than horse-riding. She always came back with stories from her shifts as a night nurse at Prudhoe Hospital. "I wanted to be part of the storybook," Peter says.

Peter began his career at the age of 16, straight after leaving school, by joining the Youth Training Scheme which paid only £22.30 per week. Aged 18, Peter started working as a Nursing Assistant. He then moved to Hexham General Hospital in 1995 but moved back to Prudhoe Hospital in 2000. Peter now works on Redburn, with young people aged 12-18 years with learning disabilities and other mental health problems.

Since the start of his career, Peter has seen a "massive change" in CNTW. "When I first started, there was no such thing as training, you just learned from your peers."

Treatment for patients has also changed greatly over the course of Peter's career. A one size fits all approach was often used, meaning there was little variation in treatment between patients. Now, Peter says: "Children and service users have choices. They have a big say and are involved in decision making about their care plan."

Peter remembers wards being more crowded meaning "there was no dignity for patients," whereas now patients have more privacy.

Peter himself has been involved in improving care for young service users. He is a Duke of Edinburgh leader, mountain bike Leader and Bikeability leader. Through these roles, Peter is able to help ensure children with learning disabilities can access the same opportunities as children in mainstream education. He explains that this can "be quite challenging at times" as it is difficult to achieve things due to the differing abilities of the young people he works with, but he works hard to adapt the activities to suit individuals' needs and care plans.

These challenges are something that Peter likes about his role. He says: "Every day is different, you never know what challenges are going to come up each day, that's one of the things I enjoy."

As a Talk 1st Champion, a Trustwide initiative to reduce violence and aggression as well as restrictive interventions, Peter shares photos on the Talk 1st Facebook group of children getting involved in these activities. He explains, "these photos are taken with consent and do not show the service users' faces. Peter posts the photos to give families peace of mind and an understanding that "young people are achieving things, not just getting treatment, during their journey to recovery."

Peter's dedication has not gone unnoticed. He was the regional winner of the Clinical Support Worker of the Year category in the Our Health Heroes Awards 2019. "It was a great honour to be nominated for the award," Peter says. He has also won a Sport Leadership Award from North Tyneside College.

After 35 years of service, Peter still takes a huge amount of pride in working for CNTW. Peter says he says he is "proud to be part of a large multi-disciplinary staff team and employee of a Trust with outstanding values." He describes his team as "tremendous" and says CNTW is "a service to be proud of."

Passion is an important part of what keeps Peter motivated. "I'm quite passionate about my role and I'm driven by passion every day. It's a beautiful thing when a career and passion come together."

When asked what advice he would give to someone considering a career as an CNTW Nursing Assistant, Peter says: "It's a very rewarding role to get into, so give it a go.

"It's a good place to be. You're changing lives and sometimes saving lives."



Lynn Williams

Recovery and Engagement Lead Lynn Williams wasted no time in starting her career at CNTW. Her first day as a Nursing Assistant at Prudhoe Hospital was the day after her 18th birthday.

Lynn comes from a family of NHS workers - her grandma was a kitchen porter, her brother is learning disability nurse and her auntie was also a nurse. It was her mum's role as a ward manager in the learning disability service at Prudhoe Hospital that inspired Lynn to join the NHS too.

When Lynn began her nursing career, she says that nurses worked hard to provide high standards of care but there was "no drive for community care" and working in an institutionalised system was difficult.

Lynn remembers that patients had little privacy, usually shared a dormitory with many others and many hid their personal possessions under their pillow as there wasn't much space to store personal items. Care was impersonal at

times. Night staff would leave bundles of clothes at the ends of patients' beds ready for the morning and men lined up in the corridors waiting for a shave.

"Care has improved significantly," Lynn says, particularly since mental health care has moved away from institutionalised treatment.

As a Recovery and Engagement Lead, Lynn develops CNTW's services for patients, including the arts and sports hubs. She explains an important part of her role is "making life as normal as possible" for people who need to receive hospital care and ensuring they have opportunities to develop social and occupational skills.

As well as ensuring provision of these services for patients, Lynn supports patients and their carers to have a say in both their treatment and service development.

Lynn says her job is very busy and varied, but she "gets a lot of pleasure out of it." For her, the best part of her work is spending a lot of time with patients and seeing them move on from hospital care. "It's always sad when I see them go, but it's also exceptionally positive."

As a manager, Lynn says spending time with patients is important because it "grounds you and reminds you what your role is."

For people looking to join CNTW as a nurse, Lynn says "care and compassion and the ability to put yourself in another person's shoes is the most important thing."



Reflecting on her career, Lynn says: "If I could go back to when I was 18, I would do exactly the same regarding my career. I've got no regrets." She says she has been really lucky to work with exceptional people during her career at CNTW.

Looking ahead, Lynn expects to retire from her Recovery and Engagement Lead role in a few years but she plans to return to the Trust as a nurse before retiring completely.



Mary Gair

Mary Gair has been a registered volunteer with CNTW since September 2017 and prior to this volunteered within Alnwick Hospice for many years, achieving a grand total of 21 years giving her time as a volunteer both within our Trust and externally to help others.

In the past, she owned a garage which was part of her family business but had always been interested in a role that involved caring for others. Later, she became a secretary at Blyth Valley Cruse Bereavement Care.

As a chaplaincy volunteer, Mary shares music, hymns and daily messages service users, staff and carers at the chaplaincy service. Mary looks forward to her volunteering shifts and finds her role very rewarding. "I always come away from volunteering feeling happy and that I've made a difference."

For Mary, the best part of volunteering is meeting and helping people. "I

love make others feel better within themselves. It's important to make others feel wanted."

The hardest part of Mary's role is "wanting to help people more." She explains: "You can support and listen, but you can't change the things that have happened."

Over the course of her time as a volunteer, Mary says Voluntary Services are easily accessible and she enjoys catching up with the team.

When asked what advice she would give to someone thinking about becoming an NHS volunteer, Mary says: "Do it, the satisfaction you will get from helping others will make you so happy."

Looking to the future, Mary has no plans to retire as a volunteer yet. She wants to carry on making a difference and helping others.



Jamie McKenna

Jamie McKenna became a registered volunteer in March 2017 to take up the role as a CQC mock inspection volunteer, working across the Trust. She has also supported PLACE assessments.

Her volunteering journey prior to joining CNTW, commenced externally at the User Centre Advice Network (UCAN), attending various meetings as a service user.

Before volunteering, Jamie worked in the motor trade for nearly 20 years, until 1992 when she began working for Royal Mail. In 2009, she became a carer for her dad.



Experience as a service user motivated Jamie to volunteer, she explains that she wanted to give something back. Jamie says: "I would love to win the lottery and donate the money to the Trust, as a service user I appreciated all they did for me."

The best part Jamie's role is talking to people and meeting people from all walks of life. Jamie advises others considering volunteering for the NHS to go for it as the experience has had a positive impact on her.

"Volunteering helps you discover what your strengths are, it helps you develop skills, you meet new people and the support from voluntary services is excellent."

Reflecting in changes to the Trust during her time a volunteer, Jamie feels that CNTW has become more proactive. During the pandemic, Jamie benefitted from contact from the Voluntary Service and appreciated that they posted her volunteering newsletter to her, as she prefers receiving paper copies to reading online.

Although Jamie enjoys her role, there are some challenges. She says the hardest part of her role is "when someone is sad and upset it can have a big impact on me." But Jamie manages to put a positive spin on this and says these feelings can make her a better volunteer as it makes her more sympathetic and caring.

In the future, Jamie is keen to continue volunteer with the Trust and volunteer even more.



Jon Gair

Head of Digital Infrastructure Jon Gair began his NHS career 32 years ago when he was undertaking an HND course in Computer Studies.

Jon's course required students to undertake a year's industrial work placement in between two years of study. He hoped to gain some experience in the private sector and had a number of interviews lined up so was reluctant to accept the placement he was initially offered at St George's Hospital. It didn't help that the drive from his home in the west end of Newcastle to Morpeth wasn't an ideal commute for his fifteen year old Mini which struggled to go above 50mph at a time when the western bypass hadn't yet been finished. However, Jon took up the placement as his course supervisor told him that his place on the course would be at risk given any kind of work placement was highly sought after at the time.

Jon describes his placement as a "massive learning experience for a 19 year old" where he was exposed to

so many different aspects of IT in a department of only two staff members. He also had to get used to patients wandering around the site, but got to know many of the patients by name within a few weeks of starting. Jon stayed on for an extra two months after his placement should have ended and even came back to work during his university holidays before taking up a full-time role after passing his course in 1992.

Jon feels that his placement at St George's taught him so much given the department was still in its infancy and there were so many areas of IT to explore including networking sites, programming, and support of various types of equipment. "My 14 months of work at St George's were far more beneficial than my two years of coursework at university," Jon says.

Over the course of his career, Jon has seen huge changes in technology and how the Trust uses it. When he first started work, Jon says despite studying IT he had never really used a PC and the Trust had around 35 computers across the whole of Northumberland. Now, CNTW has around 10,000 computers across a much bigger area. The IT team has grown from just two people, Jon and Darren McKenna, now Director of Digital, to a team of more than 100 staff.

Back when Jon began his career, he says computer viruses and cyber attacks "weren't something people were too concerned about" and most staff would have been able to continue work with little disruption if IT was unavailable for a few weeks. Now, "these potential threats are massive and any kind of IT outage can have a major impact on the Trust."

Jon says he also seen the Trust grow significantly over the past 30 years, covering a greater geographical area and looking after many more patients in the community. He says: "no matter how big we become, we must never lose sight of that sense of togetherness and always aim to work more as one, otherwise you just get isolated departmental silos."

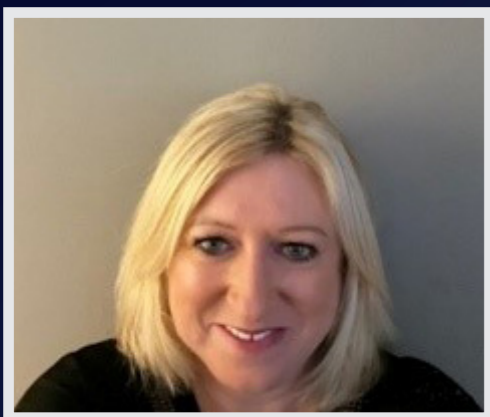
When asked about the most challenging aspect of his role, Jon says managing competing priorities can be hard as most new Trust developments rely on IT support in some way. As for the best part his job, Jon says: "it's the range of staff that you end up working with and the difference you see the department is making to staff and patients." For instance, during the pandemic the IT team helped to roll out equipment to enable patients to keep in touch with families and friends at home.



Jon says people searching for a job in IT tend to look for opportunities in the private sector, but they should not disregard the NHS as a good employer for IT specialists. "People tend to view the NHS as one huge organisation but there are a number of NHS organisations with their own skilled in-house teams so there are plenty of opportunities to consider in different IT specialities," says Jon.

His advice for people working in IT is to "try and explore as many of the different areas of IT as possible. Finding what interests you the most is always going to be the best route to success."

Jon has no plans to retire yet: "There is still plenty of work to get on with at CNTW and the thing about IT is that there is always an expectation that you need to learn more as technology evolves."



Tracey Sopp

Managing Director Tracey Sopp began her career in the private sector before finding a job in the Finance Office at Newcastle Health Authority more than 30 years ago.

Tracey “stumbled into the NHS by compete chance.” She applied for the role in the Finance Office to fill an employment gap and in the back of her mind was thinking about returning to the private sector to work in accountancy. Tracey says: “I never thought I would stay at the NHS but I suppose it just got under my skin and I found I liked doing something which contributed in some way towards patient care.”

After undertaking several roles during her long CNTW career and through a number of predecessor organisations, Tracey is now Managing Director of NTW Solutions, a subsidiary of CNTW which provides a broad range of services to the Trust. As a Managing Director, Tracey says no two days are the same. Tracey is involved with the business development of NTW

Solutions and spends a lot of time engaging with staff and in meetings with teams across the company.

Tracey says the best part of her job is chatting to staff to find out “what life feels like for them right now” and how she can help. Tracey speaks highly of the NTW Solutions team and says she is “absolutely blown away by the passion of some of our staff.”

The most difficult part of Tracey’s job is that she finds there is sometimes not enough hours in a day to achieve everything she’s aiming for. Despite these challenges, Tracey says: “The rewards make it worth it.” Like many organisations at the moment, Tracey also says the current cost of living crisis is presenting challenges at work and for staff at home.

Tracey has seen many changes over the years and has seen a lot of transformation in the NHS. One of the biggest changes Tracey has seen over the course of her career is the advance in technology which has made running some services far more efficient. When she first started work in finance, all the monthly and year end accounts took a long time as they had to be handwritten, whereas now use of systems make this process a lot quicker and more efficient. Also, Teams has transformed how we meet and have conversations.

Tracey’s adaptable nature and positive outlook when it comes to change has served her well as she has seen a lot of organisational change during her time in the NHS, as well as changes brought in by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although Tracey’s career has turned out a lot different to what she expected, she says: “I feel very fortunate and very grateful for all of the support I’ve had and all the amazing people have worked with in CNTW, its predecessors and in NTW Solutions.”

She says she would recommend finance as a career path “being an accountant can take you in lots of different directions and although it can sound boring, it’s not all about numbers. It’s also about understanding services and finding ways to operate more efficiently.”

Tracey has no plans retire at the moment and feels content in her current role - “I’ve just started this job role and I feel there is a lot I would like us to achieve in NTW Solutions, so I would like to stay doing this job as well as I can for as long as I can with the amazing team we have here in Solutions. I am fortunate to work with great people across the CNTW group.”





Jill Stewart

Nursing Assistant Jill Stewart has worked at CNTW for 30 years.

Jill's positive view of others makes her perfectly suited to a career in nursing. She recalls her mam telling her 'you always see the good in people before any bad' on more than one occasion. Nursing also runs in the family, her auntie and uncle were both nurses at St George's Park Hospital for many years. They lived in the staff housing at St George's so Jill and her cousins grew up playing in the hospital grounds. She says: "I only ever wanted to work in a job with a caring role, I'd never really thought of anything else."

Whilst Jill was still at school, she participated in a two week work experience placement on Mitford Ward at St George's. She says: "I absolutely loved it and regularly went back to visit."

After leaving school, Jill undertook a two year Youth Training Scheme in care, which involved working at Hepscott Park Care Home for 18 months and then six months in a residential care home.

Jill was on the waiting list for a role at St George's and accepted a series of temporary contracts before securing a permanent job at the hospital. She has worked on several wards at St George's and worked in a community setting for several years before returning to work at the hospital.

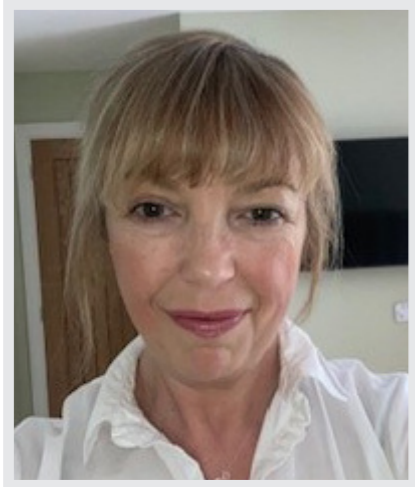
Jill has always worked within services for older people and is currently part of a multi-disciplinary team on the Woodhorn Ward caring for people with organic mental health illnesses. Jill contributes to every part of the patient's care planning and ensures their physical, mental and wellbeing needs are being met.

Because Jill works with patients with dementia, she says: "I think one of the most important parts of my job is being whoever at that time my patient needs me to be." Sometimes patients confuse Jill for a friend or family member. Patients go to her when they're in need of comfort but also when they're feeling angry and frustrated.

Seeing the effects of dementia on patients and their families is one of the most challenging parts of Jill's job. She says: "As staff we have feelings too and we do feel their pain. We do our job, but we also struggle at times."

The best part of her job, Jill says; "is not only working with a fabulous team but seeing a difference, an improvement in someone that comes into our service and seeing progression, seeing their quality of life change for the better."

Jill encourages others thinking about working for CNTW to "go for it". She feels that CNTW is a supportive and caring place to work with outstanding training opportunities. "I'm still here 30 years later and can't see myself doing anything else," Jill says.



Andrea Cox

Andrea originally went to university to study social policy and wanted to be a social worker. Instead, Andrea explains: “I took a part time job while I was at university, working in nursing homes, and that really just prompted my interest in the caring role - I found a love of nursing.

“I ended up going through clearing when my social policy course finished and went on to Bradford University to do my nurse training.”

Her first job as a newly qualified nurse was on an all female unit in Leeds, in 1997. Andrea worked in Leeds until 2005, progressing to become a matron at the Trust.

Andrea says she became really committed to working in one organisation, but a restructure gave her the chance to reflect and consider her options. “Although I wasn’t put at risk of redundancy or anything, it gave me an opportunity to think about the fact that I didn’t have to always stay with one organisation; I could explore maybe doing something different and look at opportunities elsewhere. So, I decided to make the move, and became a ward manager back in Bradford, where I went on to become a service manager.

“I spent three years there and really enjoyed it. But I knew after that, I wouldn’t be as tied to one organisation as I had been previously. My husband is from Cumbria, and so in 2008 we made the decision to move up to Cumbria when I was pregnant with my first daughter.”

Andrea admits that the Trust which was running services in the region at the time was struggling: “There were real challenges at times, but I really believe positive people should go and work in struggling Trusts. The main focus was still always around patient care, and I was able to link in with people that were positive and wanted to do the best for the people we served.

When the announcement was made that mental health services in Cumbria would transfer to CNTW in 2019, Andrea looked forward to the prospect of working for a bigger, specialist Trust - similar to Leeds - again. “I was very excited when we began meeting Gary O’Hare, the Chief Operating Officer at CNTW at the time, and preparing to transfer services to CNTW.”

Andrea now works as an Associate Director in the Trust’s North Cumbria locality and feels very lucky to have met supportive people throughout her career. “I remember, when I was very junior, having a supervision with one of the senior nurses, Annie Greenwood, and I thought she had the best job in the world - I never thought I’d get there! But she saw something in me and took me under her wing. I’ve been really, really fortunate that I’ve had good people around me who really believed in me.”

Like many people, the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions prompted Andrea to reflect on how she works. “I’ve made a really conscious decision to try and be more patient and team-facing,” she says. “I meet with our Night Coordinators for a few hours every six weeks, for example. I’ve recently found working with the International Recruitment team and supporting international nurses into North Cumbria really valuable.

“I enjoy spending time with teams when I can, I’m a real people person. The challenge is, we don’t always get enough time to do that as an operational manager.”

Reflecting on her career, Andrea says, “If I had my time again and if the opportunities had been available that are around now, I would probably have become a nurse consultant. I think like a lot of people in the 90s, if you were great at your job within the NHS, you went into management. So, it’s not a regret, it’s just one of those opportunities that just wasn’t there at that time. But now I really champion the nurse consultant pathway for others.

“I’m really proud to say I’m a nurse. Whenever I make a decision, I do think of myself as a nurse first, and a manager second - that’s the way I’ve tried to work ethically across the last 25 years. Because, if it wasn’t for the patients that we serve, we wouldn’t be employed, and I don’t take that for granted.

“There’s been real highs and lows within my professional and personal life, but I’ve always consistently returned to asking myself, ‘how would I like my mum and dad to be treated if they were in hospital, or my brother, or my husband, or my children?’ That is what brings me back into work every day.”





Lindsay Hamberg

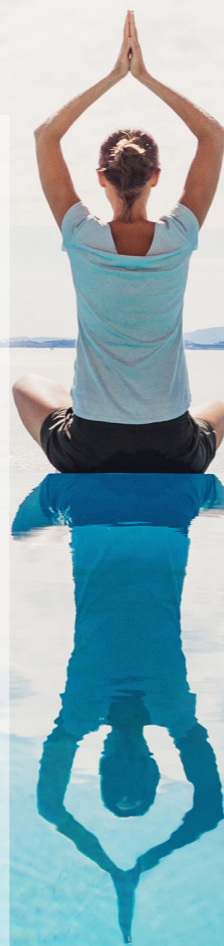
Lindsay Hamberg now works as a Peer Support Facilitator, but she first joined the NHS 26 years ago as a temporary member of staff in the Records Department at Newcastle General Hospital. She has worked in a variety of teams over the years, but has ‘found her niche’ supporting staff’s wellbeing, both in her day job, in the wider Trust, and in her local community.

“I was probably a bit of a slow burner in terms of finding what I wanted to do coming into the NHS,” Lindsay says. “I had several admin jobs before, but something pulled me into the NHS...it just felt like a bit of a natural process.”

After starting as a temporary member of staff, Lindsay became a medical secretary, before joining the Mental Health Act Office team. There, she enjoyed getting to grips with mental health legislation. Some might see this as a ‘dry’ topic, but Lindsay says she really enjoyed learning about the importance of it and making sure that staff are all working within that important legal framework.

While working in the Mental Health Act Office, Lindsay felt really focused on ‘climbing the corporate ladder’ and completed several qualifications to help her pursue this. These included courses in leadership and management, a degree with first class honours and a postgraduate certificate in mental health law. Lindsay became a senior trainer, which she “absolutely loved”, and got a lot of satisfaction from delivering Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act, and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards training.

Unfortunately, after a few years a restructure meant that Lindsay had to move roles again. She took a step back to reflect on what was important to her and what she truly wanted to do. Outside of work, Lindsay trained as a yoga teacher, wellbeing coach, and more recently qualified as a Shakti dance teacher, and in reiki and sound healing.



Next, Lindsay joined the Risk Management team – another subject that some might find ‘dry’, but that Lindsay found very meaningful and important. She loved the team and the role, and was able to deliver training again. “I really felt that I was appreciated for the work that I was doing,” she explains.

Lindsay had also been busy bringing up a family in between all of this! But throughout these years, Lindsay says, “I was looking at ‘climbing the corporate ladder’, but that wasn’t really what I wanted to do.

“So, when this Peer Support Facilitator job in in the Involvement team came up, I applied for it. It was more in alignment with who I am and what I wanted to do. Because of my own lived experience of mental health, I felt as though I was better suited to something that I was passionate about and where I can support others. And so that’s how I ended up in the job that I’m in now, and I absolutely love it!

“From joining the NHS 26 years ago, my journey has led me to where I’m meant to be, and I’m massively grateful for that.”

Lindsay has now been working as a Peer Support Facilitator for just over a year, focussing on the development and wellbeing of the Peer Supporters and promoting the role to clinical teams. Lindsay explains: “Our Peer Support service is growing.

“In the North locality, where I work, we’ve grown over the past year from having six peer supporters, and we’re now at 20!

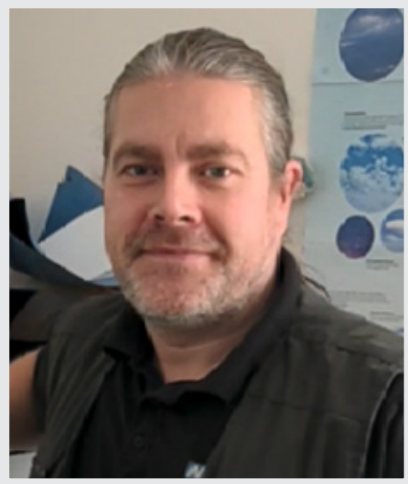
“The best part of my job is connection and being around like-minded people, all supporting one another and working in a nurturing team to strengthen and embed processes, laying solid foundations for Peer Support across the Trust.

“I have finally found my niche. I just want to fully give my all to developing Peer Support and making sure that there is a really supportive structure in place for them; wellbeing is my priority.”

Alongside her main role, Lindsay also supports staff wellbeing in other ways. As a yoga teacher and Shakti dance teacher, this is close to her heart, and Lindsay offers free classes to staff online. She has also recently become Chair of the Mind, Mental Health and Wellbeing Staff Network.

“Making sure that we prioritise our own wellbeing as well as supporting others is so important to me. We all work in a mental health trust, and we’re very good at looking after our patients and carers, but sometimes not so good looking after ourselves.

“I do feel that things are changing, and there is a lot more out there now in terms of wellbeing support. I think we as a Trust are moving in the right direction, but there is still a lot more we can do. It is important we focus on staying person-centred with everything that we do, and be authentic and kind, caring and compassionate, to our staff, our patients, carers, and the wider community.”



Eric Rothwell

Now an Artist in the Recovery and Engagement team within Secure Care at Northgate Hospital, Eric Rothwell started his NHS career as a caterer.

His mother worked in care homes for a while, and he volunteered to help out on day trips for the residents. "I remember ordering 34 bags of chips for a coach full of elderly people."

Eric worked in catering for four years, but he realised it wasn't the right career for him. He saw a vacancy for an Occupational Trainer/Nursing Assistant which involved providing visual creativity via activities for the residents and applied straightaway. Eric had already managed to bring his artistic skills into his catering role. He has previously been asked to decorate the canteen in a Disney theme for Christmas lunch. These Disney drawings were used during his interview for the new position and the panel was impressed.

"I was thrilled to get the job and begin a new path within the NHS," Eric says. In his new role, he worked with the Day Services team to provide arts and craft-based activities throughout the community and hospital as well as organise large events. The role also included facilitating opportunities for creativity and expression, as well as residents having some fun, as part of their care pathways. Alongside working, Eric studied part-time for a BA Hons degree in Fine Art.

Eric later moved into the Arts Project Team, who were providing arts and crafts sessions for service users in hospital and community settings. He says: "It was exciting for me to join a team of professional freelance artists and musicians. I felt I was learning the different roles, including managing my own workload every day."

Eric worked in the Arts Project team for around 13 years before moving onto his current job running an Art Hub. Eric provides daily arts and crafts workshops as well as short courses for service users at Northgate Hospital. He says the best part of his job is: "using my skills and experience to help others learn help others learn and progress as well

as providing a tool to assist in maintaining wellbeing."

Working for CNTW over the past 25 years, has "moulded me into who I am today," Eric says. He explains: "Working with people in need every day and working with colleagues I have met, befriended and lost over the years, has given me a certain confidence and a life-long lesson.

"From a shy youth to a grey bearded man who can make important decisions through personal experience and knowledge."

When asked about his plans for the future, Eric jokes that he aims to win the Thunderball jackpot and use the money to build a community art café for local artists to showcase their work. In reality, he says: "I will continue to be an artist for the people, it's a unique and rewarding position to be in."



50+ years

Eileen Eve

45+ years

Karen Bell
Wayne McGlen

40+ years

Tracey Ball
Paul Courtney
Janice Dobey
Janis Fitzwilliam
Andrew Hope
Margaret Kelly

Alison Kelly
Mark Knowles
Vida Morris
Gary O'Hare
Kathleen Pringle
Anne Sawkill

Susan Swann
Helen Claire Taylor
Corinna Thompson
Jeffrey Turnbull
Paul Willis
Stephen Wright

Volunteers

5+ years

Maureen Chapple
Mary Gair
Jamie McKenna

35+ years

Paul Armiger
Dale Armstrong
Deborah Ash
Paula Batey
Alison Belshaw
Karen Blackburn
Lynne Brown
Mark Bunting
Julie Burns
Anne Clark
Janice Clark
Peter Clarkson
Brian Close
Andrea Davis
Dennis Davison
Kathryn Elliott
Andrea Embleton
Elaine Fletcher
Peter Haddow
Catherine Hamilton

Lesley Hamilton
Allison Hogg
Deborah Hope
Nigel Howard
Ralph Howlett
Gavin Jones
Sharon Kirkup
Martin Laing
Tracey Lawson
Jeanette Lawson
Karen Leonard
Jane Lloyd
Sharon Lough
Dawn Loveland
Sharon Lynn
Eamonn Lynott
Barbara McConnell
Catherine McPartlin
Angela Mooney
Carolyn Muirhead

David Mullin
Jill Ness
Timothy Oakley
Mark Oliver
Anne Pearson
Elaine Queenan
Mandy Robinson
Elizabeth Scott-Tatum
Nichola Sirey
Linda Smith
Jill Stewart
David Storm
Suzanne Thompson
Margaret Tolchard
Pamela Travers
Amanda Turner
Duncan Weston
Joanne Wharton
Penelope Wilkinson
Lynn Williams
Haley Williams

30+ years

Joanne Aisbitt
William Anderson
Ruth Andrews
Jacqueline Armstrong
Robert Bailey
Pauline Bell
Philip Boyle
Andrew Brittlebank
Alison Burnage
Kimberley Carter
Andrew Cathrae
Jill Chaplin
Judith Charlton-Fyfe
Rob Clark
Josephine Clark
Pamela Conway
Beverley Cook
Stephen Cuthbert
Jill Davie
Guy Dodgson

Alison Doyle
Michael Flanders
Jonathan Gair
Judith Galbraith
Catherine Gibson
Nicholas Hailes
Bernadette Hobby
Teresa Ingram
Victoria Irving
Anne-Marie Lamb
Kevin Lindsay
Lesley Lockwood
Emma Lovell
Diana Lyons
Julie McCoy
Susan Milne
David Muir
Ashley Murphy
John Nicholls
Wendy Osborne

Theresa Osborne
Lavinia Park
Audrey Pattison
Russell Patton
Alison Paxton
Julie Rearden
Emma Reid
Judith Robson
Gavin Robson
Carol Ross
Sylvia Smith
Tracey Sopp
Jill Stewart
Louise Thompson
Robert Tiseman
Barry Walker
Jaine Wareing
Sandra Whittle
Johanne Wiseman

25+ years

Tracee Allison
Sasha Ames
Lorena Atkinson
Diane Aynsley
Caroline Bainbridge
Martine Bamborough
Gwen Bambrough
Melanie Bash
Angela Bennett
Lesley Brass
Bridget Brown
Angela Brownbridge
Nichola Browne
Vannessa Butchart
Linda Chambers
Judith Cooper
Andrea Cox
Ann Davidson
Jillian Davies
Heather Davison
Helen Dawson
Angela Devine
Lisa Donohue
Karen Dowson
Barbara Doyle
Selma Ebrahim
Jocelyn Emery
Lisa Evans
Alexandrina Forster
Joe Gallagher
Julie Gardner
Sharon Graham
Stuart Greig
Philippa Griffiths
Lindsay Hamberg
Paul Harle
Linda Hartley

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Kirsty Hindmarsh
Angelina Honour
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