

Doctors' strike: advice

12 July 2023



A wave of back-to-back strikes will severely impact hospital services over the coming week - and will follow the busiest month of 2023 for one hospital group.

St George's, Epsom and St Helier hospitals have faced significant pressure in recent weeks, with emergency attendances in June ramping up. Last month about 880 people visited one of the Group's three emergency departments (EDs) daily - about 10% more than is usual.

The emergency departments also saw extraordinary demand some days - including one record-breaking Monday when they had their busiest day ever. Now, ahead of this week's junior doctors' strikes, which get underway at 7 am on Thursday and continue until 7 am the following Tuesday (18 July), members of the public have been warned to expect disruption and longer waits, and to avoid visiting the ED when it's not an emergency.

There will also be an additional challenge when hospital consultants go on strike just days after the junior doctors' action ends. That walk-out is due to take place on Thursday 20 July and Friday 21 July.

Dr Richard Jennings, Group Chief Medical Officer for St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group, said: "June was very busy and that's also continued into July - which makes it more difficult when we're trying to prepare for the inevitable challenges strike action brings. Ahead of each round of strikes I've urged the public to take steps to help us and to come to our EDs in an emergency only - and I am making the same request again now when it is more important than ever. We have a very tough week ahead and we need your support to ensure we can prioritise care for our sickest and most seriously ill patients."

The hospital group recognise that it's going to be the first time this year that a junior doctors' strike has taken place over the weekend and into a Monday. This has prompted further concern, as Monday is normally the busiest day of the week in the Group's EDs. This was even more pronounced last month, with 1,000-plus average daily attendances on Mondays - significantly higher than a typical day of 800.

Dr Jennings added: "If people need medical help - during the strikes or at any other time - we would encourage them to contact NHS 111 online for 24/7 advice on where to go and what to do if they have an illness or injury. When it's a real emergency or life-threatening, of course, people should always call 999 or go to an emergency department."

Strikes will also impact other services at the hospitals, and will mean that some appointments, procedures and operations may be postponed to ensure emergency care can be prioritised. Patients will be contacted directly if their appointments are rescheduled, and should continue to come forward for care as normal unless they hear otherwise.

NHS 111 online should always be the first port of call when you have a health need that's not an emergency, as it will direct you to the best place to get help for your symptoms.

Pharmacies, meanwhile, can offer advice and over-the-counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, and aches and pains. Some pharmacies will be open at weekends, and you can find your nearest one here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy>

In a life-threatening emergency, you should always call 999 or go to an emergency department.

If you need mental health support in a crisis, and live in Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton or Wandsworth you can call South West London's 24/7 Mental Health Crisis Line on 0800 028 8000. There's more information about this service here:

<https://www.swlstg.nhs.uk/patients-carers/crisis-support/mental-health-support-line>

For adults, young people, and children in Surrey and North East Hampshire, 24-hour support is available by calling: 0800 915 4644. There's more information here:

<https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services>

St George's, Epsom and St Helier hospitals press.

Epsom medics sky-dive for babies

12 July 2023



A team of obstetricians, gynaecologists, neonatologists and nurses who work at **Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust** have raised nearly £10,000 for **Bliss**, the UK's leading charity for babies born premature or sick.

Radhika Viswanatha, Nina Underwood, Ramesh Ganapathy, Demetri Panayi, Salim Yasin, Charlotte Pearse, Vicky Minns, Cristina Arias-Rey and Sharon Young took part in a skydive on 28 May 2023 at the Old Sarum Park in Salisbury.

1 in every 7 babies born in the UK will need specialist care and the group have a special link to Bliss, as they each look after women and their babies during pregnancy and delivery and beyond at Epsom and St Helier Hospital.

Some of the babies they deliver are more vulnerable than others, so are looked after by the hospital's neonatal team.

Demetri Panayi said: "Our charity skydive was born out of moments of madness, midlife crises and irrational personal desire! But it gave us the opportunity to raise money for a cause close to our hearts, and to our patients."

Donations to their skydive are helping Bliss to drive improvements in neonatal care, to ensure that the needs of babies are at the heart of policy and planning for the future, and to provide information and support to all families with a baby born premature or sick.

Richard Moody, Director of Fundraising at Bliss, said: "We are so grateful for the exceptional fundraising efforts of Demetri and his colleagues. Each donation to Bliss is going towards our mission of helping all babies born premature or sick in the UK have the best chance of survival and quality of life.

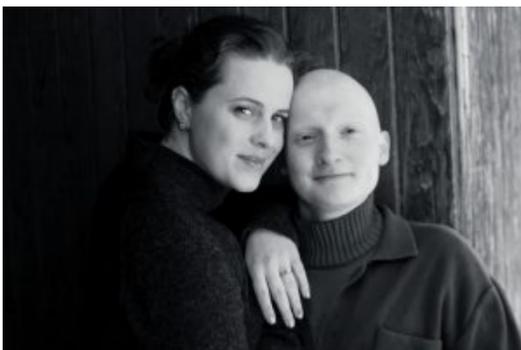
"This is a great example of how a perinatal team can come together to raise awareness and money for Bliss."

You can find more information and donate here: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/skydive2023>

Molly Gorman

Running ahead of Crohn's disease

12 July 2023



"I didn't think I would ever be able to run 10k" said **Epsom man** and Crohn's disease sufferer **Harry Reed**. But he will now compete in the London race on 9 July to raise awareness of disease.

Last year, after a long battle with Crohn's Disease, 24-year-old Harry Reed weighed just 48kg. Today he is training for the ASICS London 10k and is in his best health of recent years. "I'm super excited," says Harry who is due to compete on July 9.

"My knee's been playing up recently, so I've had to take it easy over the last couple of weeks...but apart from that...I have a feeling it's going to go very well." Before [developing Crohn's] I was an athlete," says Harry who grew up in Epsom. "I was a county sprinter and I actually qualified for the county races."

After losing much of his strength due to illness Harry's race preparation now incorporates muscle training to help with his endurance. "All the strength that you'd normally build up in like your joints, I lost it. So, I'm currently doing a lot of work to kind of build up the strength in my ligaments, tendons and around my knees and ankles."

Crohn's Disease is a chronic condition which causes parts of the gut to become swollen and inflamed resulting in symptoms including pain, diarrhoea, weight loss and extreme tiredness.

Harry developed Crohn's in 2015 when, after a calf muscle injury, he contracted glandular fever later leading to the onset of his disease. The route to a diagnosis was not straight forward and Harry spent his GCSEs through to A levels in and out of hospitals. "They just couldn't figure it out because my blood tests weren't coming back with anything specific that was wrong," Harry says.

Harry was finally diagnosed in 2017, 2 years after his symptoms began. But, that year, during an initial surgery to treat the Crohn's, Harry developed life threatening infections of the blood and stomach lining known as sepsis and peritonitis. He was transferred from Epsom to St Helier's hospital for emergency surgery.

"I wasn't expected to live. So that was a bit of a miracle in itself...I had to basically say goodbye to my parents, my family at that time because we all knew that it wasn't good."

The complications did not end there. In 2019, Harry developed hair loss known as alopecia. He also experienced two rounds of failed drug treatments which led to a severe return of symptoms in 2022.

"My diet sort of got narrower and narrower about things that were okay for me to eat...by the end of September [2022], I had not been able to eat for a couple of weeks. I ended up going into hospital through A&E due to the backlog of patients with COVID."

Harry was given intravenous nutrition before undergoing further surgery to remove the problem part of his bowel. Thankfully the operation was a success, and it was in 2022 that Harry was able to rediscover his love for running.

"When I first started.... it went terribly. But it felt great when I got back, to actually feel like I accomplished something or at least to have that sort of exercise endorphin release. Mentally the fog had been lifted for just a moment which was really great."

"As I was able to eat more, my body was able to take in more calories, my strength grew. By November of 2022 I was given the kind of all clear by my surgeon... It's been a blessing to be able to do it for myself and prove to myself that I can do it. I didn't think I would ever be able to run 10k so to be able to feel confident about doing a good job is so exciting."

Harry will run to raise awareness of the disease, which affects over 1 in 123 people in the UK*.

"It's an invisible illness - you'll never know if someone's got Crohn's," says Harry. "I think the tough thing... is realising the severity and the kind of the intensity that people suffer when it comes to the flare ups. It's something that is really hard to put into perspective. I think also the lack of energy that you have...it's like you have to work 10 times as hard. And most of the time your output is 10 times less. I think once you can be educated, you can then have empathy towards people and some more understanding".

Harry currently works as a creative director for a publishing house start-up based in Epsom, where he lives with his fiancé. His upcoming race will be the start of many, with plans to run the Bacchus Wine 10k at Denbies Wine Estate in September.

You can find out more about Harry's upcoming race at

<https://limelightsports.club/event/asics-london-10k-2023>.

*Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis - stats from Crohn's and Colitis UK

Pressure on Epsom Hospital at boiling point?

12 July 2023



Visits to emergency departments (EDs) rocketed on Monday, with more people coming through the doors than ever before. More than 1,250 people went to one of St George's, Epsom and St Helier's three EDs - a rise on the previous record of 1,170, and a huge increase on a typical day of about 800 attendances.

It comes just hours before hundreds of junior doctors prepare to strike across the hospitals group - prompting fears of a "double whammy" of pressures.

ED attendances on Monday 12 June were as follows:

- St George's: 580
- Epsom and St Helier: 674
- Kingston: 533
- Croydon: 622

Croydon and Kingston hospitals also experienced very high demand and easily surpassed their previous highest number of attendances.

Kingston Hospital set a new record seeing more than 530 people visiting its emergency department in one day, including 78 ambulances and 455 walk-ins.

Croydon University Hospital saw 622 unwell patients needing to see an emergency care consultant - 16% above the previous busiest summer day on record on 17 June 2021.

Dr **Richard Jennings**, Group Chief Medical Officer at St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group, said: "We have never been busier, and with the upcoming strikes it's going to be a very challenging week.

"We're here, as always, for those who need us. But now more than ever, we need the public's support in those cases where it is not an emergency. NHS 111 online should be your first port of call in these instances, as it can direct you to where you need to go."

Members of the British Medical Association and Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association will strike for 72 hours from **7am on Wednesday 14 June until 7am on Saturday 17 June**.

This action will impact services at hospitals, and will mean that some appointments, procedures and operations may be postponed to ensure emergency care can be prioritised. Patients will be contacted directly if their appointments are rescheduled, and should continue to come forward for care as normal unless they hear otherwise.

The mercury is expected to remain in the high 20s, and even early 30s, when these strikes start - and will hit hot temperatures once action has finished, too, with the UK Health Security Agency and the Met Office extending their heat-health alert to Monday.

When temperatures rise, more people, especially those in high-risk groups, can suffer from illnesses like heat exhaustion and dehydration, as well as sunburn.

The pollen count has also been very high, and there has been a surge in people visiting EDs with shortness of breath. This might not be anything to worry about, but it is scary and sometimes those who are experiencing it will need medical help. NHS England has this advice for people who are affected.

If you have an underlying respiratory condition, you should contact your GP or asthma nurse as needed - unless it is an emergency, in which case you should call 999 or go to ED immediately.

Everyone should stay safe and well in the hotter weather, and take steps such as: looking out for people who may struggle to keep cool and hydrated, such as elderly relatives or neighbours; keeping windows closed when the room is cooler than outside; and staying hydrated.

You should also stay out of the sun between 11am and 3pm, apply suncream regularly, and wear a hat.

Dr Jennings added: "This weather has undoubtedly contributed to the rise in people - some who are vulnerable and very sick - coming to our emergency departments.

"Help us to prioritise care for those need it the most, and use our services wisely."

If you need urgent medical help use NHS 111 online first, which can direct you to where you need to go. Pharmacies, meanwhile, can offer advice and over-the-counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, and aches and pains.

To find out more about staying safe during hot weather, visit the NHS's website.

St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group

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NHS website remedy for hay-fever

12 July 2023



With hay-fever suffering at a peak the NHS urges sufferers to visit its website for advice and reduce pressures on its telephone and other services.

The number of hay fever sufferers seeking advice from the NHS website has more than tripled - reaching 122,650 visits last week.

Analysis by NHS England, which runs the NHS website, found weekly visits to the hay fever page have increased by 252% in the past five weeks from 34,878 visits during the first week of May.

Sunday was the busiest day of the year so far for visits to the web page with 27,834 visits in 24 hours - an average of one visit every three seconds.

The surge coincides with figures seen last year when hay fever page visits topped a million during the six months from March to October, peaking at 462,706 in June 2022. December was the quietest month for visits with only 5,658.

NHS information pages on hay fever treatments have also proved popular during the past five weeks. Visits to the antihistamines and cetirizine pages have more than doubled, and visits to the fexofenadine page have more than tripled to reach 45,450 visits last week.

Most hay fever symptoms can be effectively managed at home or with medication widely and cheaply available in community pharmacies or supermarkets.

Robert Cleary, NHS England's Content Director for the NHS website, said:

"Many of us experience hay fever symptoms at this time of year and the nhs.uk hay fever advice page provides the latest medical advice to manage your symptoms, as well as giving guidance on when to get support from NHS services.

"Millions of people make the NHS website their first port of call for advice and information on a wide range of conditions. The website is here for anyone 24 hours a day, making it easy for people to receive health advice and support from a trustworthy source around the clock."

There is currently no cure for hay fever, which usually hits between late March and September when the weather is warm, windy and humid, and the pollen count is at its highest.

The symptoms include sneezing, coughing, a runny or blocked nose, as well as red, itchy or watery eyes. Sufferers can also experience headaches, earache or lose their sense of smell.

The NHS hay fever page details several ways people can ease their symptoms including staying indoors, keeping their windows shut, not cutting their grass or coating their nostrils with Vaseline to trap the pollen.

The page also offers advice on different treatments available from pharmacists and recommends when people should seek help from their GP.

The NHS website is the UK's biggest health website with an estimated 2.6 million visits a day in 2022 from people seeking information and advice.

It includes over 4,000 pages and provides information about 990 medical conditions as well other health services including applying for a free UK Global Health Insurance Card for healthcare cover abroad, finding a GP, and a pregnancy due date calculator.

For more information visit Hay fever - NHS (www.nhs.uk).

NHS England Media Team

Image: Fitzpatrick AM CC BY-SA 4.0

Hospitals heatwave warning

12 July 2023



Summer looks like it's here at last - but with a surge in temperatures also meaning a surge in people visiting emergency departments, members of the public are urged to stay safe in the sun.

Earlier this week the UK Health Security Agency and Met Office issued their first heat-health alert of the year in six regions, including London and the South East, which comes into effect tomorrow (Friday) at 9am.



With the mercury set to peak at about 30 degrees Celsius, they are warning people to stay safe and well - and St George's, **Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals** and Health Group is echoing that plea.

Dr **Richard Jennings**, Group Chief Medical Officer, said: "When temperatures start to soar, more people, especially those in high-risk groups, can suffer from illnesses like heat exhaustion, dehydration, and of course sunburn.

"It often means our hospitals are busier as a result. As always, we are there for those who need us, but please do take steps to stay safe and well, and avoid a trip to our emergency departments."

High-risk groups include elderly people, babies, young children, and those with heart, respiratory and serious health problems. But everyone should stay safe and well in the hotter weather - and take the following steps:

- Looking out for people who may struggle to keep cool and hydrated, such as elderly relatives or neighbours
- Keeping windows closed when the room is cooler than outside, but opening them at night when the temperatures has dropped, and closing curtains on rooms that face the sun to keep indoor spaces cooler
- Drinking plenty of fluids and avoiding excess alcohol. Taking water with you, if travelling
- Trying to keep out of the sun between 11am and 3pm, and staying in the shade
- Applying suncream regularly, and wearing a hat
- Not exercising during the hottest parts of the day

Staying in the sun for too long increases the risk of becoming unwell. Heat exhaustion is not serious and usually gets better when someone cools down, but if this turns into heatstroke it needs to be treated as an emergency. You may have heat exhaustion if you are experiencing headaches, dizziness, loss of appetite, and feeling sick or confused.

If you are affected by any of these symptoms, it's important to cool down as quickly as possible. There is more information on the NHS website on how to do this - and also what to do if your condition worsens.

The hospitals group is also reminding people that its emergency departments are there for serious and life-threatening emergencies - particular with a third wave of junior doctors' strikes coming up next week, which will also have a big impact on services. Hundreds of doctors from St George's, Epsom and St Helier could walk out over the 72 hours.

Dr Jennings added: "We often find we're as busy in the days following a heatwave. The hot-weather alert is in place until Monday morning - less than 48 hours before many of our junior doctors will be taking industrial action.

"That's why it's even more important for the public to take steps to help us, help our staff, and of course, help themselves."

If you need urgent medical help you should use NHS 111 online first, which can direct you to where you need to go.

Pharmacies, meanwhile, can offer advice and over-the-counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, and aches and pains.

To find out more about staying safe during hot weather, visit the NHS's website.

Epsom Hospital's speedy chemo for cancer kids

12 July 2023



A mum says she is “amazed” by a **new chemotherapy service** that has proven to be invaluable for young cancer patients and their families. **Nathan Dunne**, nine, is usually “back home and in his pyjamas” within 90 minutes of leaving the house to have the cancer treatment - known as Vincristine - at **Epsom Hospital**, and is in the treatment room itself for just half an hour.

Mum **Oana** is full of nothing but praise for the service, and says it has significantly reduced the amount of time they spend in hospital for appointments - with Nathan previously receiving his Vincristine dose elsewhere. “It’s so much quicker, and Nathan gets everyone’s full attention - plus, the toy box is there already waiting for him on arrival!” said Oana.

“The staff are amazing, they know what they have to do and are always helpful - and if they don’t know the answers to my questions, they will find out. We’re in and out really quickly, and I look forward to the days when we are in Epsom Hospital now. We know the nurses who are working, and we see often the same faces. They know our children and they remember the routine that works for us - for Nathan, that’s counting ‘1, 2, 3’ when the needle goes in, and back again when it’s taken out. I’m just amazed at how quickly we’re back home after a visit for Vincristine.”

Nathan - who lives with his family in **Worcester Park** - was diagnosed with leukaemia in June 2020. Aged six at the time, he started to complain of tummy aches, and also started to feel really tired - with Oana recalling how one day she had to carry him home from the park because he couldn’t walk.

On another occasion Nathan had a wobbly tooth that wouldn’t stop bleeding for two days, and he also had a swollen finger that hurt when using his iPad.

Concerned about her son, Oana sought help, and Nathan was eventually referred to St Helier Hospital for blood tests. Later on, the family received devastating news: there was a 90 per cent chance Nathan had leukaemia. “We were devastated - it was the shock of our lives,” said Oana. “I didn’t think for a moment that was what it would be.”

The diagnosis was officially confirmed shortly afterwards, and Nathan spent a night at St Helier Hospital before being transferred to **Epsom Hospital**’s paediatric oncology unit (POSCU).

He was then moved to the Royal Marsden on his seventh birthday, and spent the next few months in the care of the teams there. Oana says Nathan understood what was happening to some extent - knowing “there was something wrong with his blood” and that he was “very poorly”. Treatment started quickly and every day.

Now, Nathan visits **Epsom** every four weeks to have treatment and is at the Royal Marsden every 12 weeks - with Oana saying the care he has received and continues to receive at both as “incredible”. Nathan is due to finish treatment in August, and is one of 10 patients to have now received a regular Vincristine infusion at Epsom Hospital.

Dr Beccy Suckling, Chief Medical Officer at Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust, said: “Ensuring our patients receive outstanding care is our biggest priority. Our new Vincristine clinics are something to be really proud of, and a lot of work has gone into getting us to this point. It’s fantastic to hear that young cancer patients like Nathan are being treated so well by our brilliant teams - and as well as thanking our wonderful staff for the care they provide, I’d like to thank Oana and Nathan for their really lovely words about that care.”

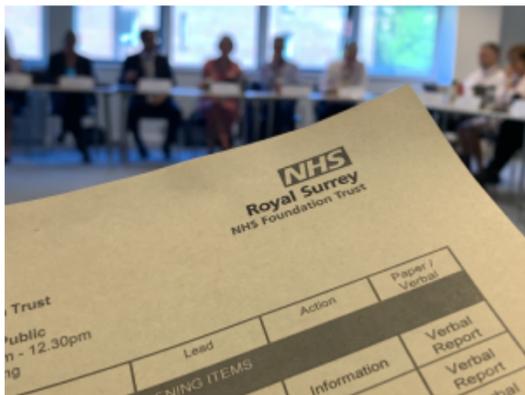
Lucy Lloyd-James, Lead Nurse for Epsom’s Paediatric Oncology Shared Care Unit, said: “Epsom Hospital is much closer to home for many of our young patients, and we’ve had such wonderful feedback about our Vincristine clinics and how quickly patients are in and out. We know how scary and overwhelming it can be for our young patients and their families, and this is one way we can make such a difficult experience just a bit easier.”

St George’s, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group

[Epsom and Ewell Times say: Thank you Nathan and Oana for your courage sharing your story.]

Junior doctor strikes to be ‘monthly’ in Surrey?

12 July 2023



Junior doctor strikes at a Surrey NHS trust is feared to become ‘monthly’ with ‘a lot less willingness’ from people to cover gaps in maintaining levels of service.

The Royal Surrey NHS foundation board meeting took place on Thursday, May 25, and almost immediately the issue of striking doctors came to the fore with staff retention and breaches of patient confidentiality also featuring prominently.

Front and centre though was the dispute over pay and conditions between the Government and junior doctors. Royal Surrey CEO Louise Stead said, with three days of industrial action already announced for June, the trust “would be going into overdrive to plan for that” but said it would be more difficult as there would be “a lot less willingness” from people to cover any gaps – a problem that would only increase “as this goes on”.

She told the meeting it was increasingly likely that there would be “strikes every month until there is a resolution”, adding “this will be very difficult”. Trust chairperson Joss Bigmore said the “whole situation was becoming “increasingly frustrating on the hard working people”. He told the meeting: “Until they find a resolution to this its just going to get worse and worse.

He said: “It was galling to see the health secretary canvassing during the election when the junior doctors were on strike”, before adding “We have managed incredibly well so far but it won’t last. We really need to find a resolution to this.”

Junior doctors in England are planning a new 72-hour walkout in June as talks with the government once again broke down. The walkout will start at 7am on Wednesday, June 14, and run until Saturday, June 17 with the British Medical Union labelling the government’s 5 per cent pay offer as not “credible”.

Among the other items discussed during the morning meeting were the increase in the number of healthcare infections being detected across the hospital, in line with the rest of the UK since coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Jacqui Tingle, the director of nursing and midwifery, said that while there had been a nationwide pattern for infectious diseases to rise as a whole, Royal Surrey had specific recorded a “spike” in c-difficile cases.

The meeting also heard about the on-going issues with recruitment, which had played a role in the three month increase in complaints received from patients.

On IT, she spoke to the “significant rise” in patient data breaches – 248 from 90 reported last year, which she said was due to the implementation of a new electronic patient record system though these are said to be in decline,

What has been happening, she said, was the new system pulled patient data from a central hub rather than the most up-to-date local lists resulting, in some cases, in confidential medical letters being sent to the wrong address.

Related reports:

Surrey doctors to go on strike?

Image: Royal Surrey Hospital Trust Board (Chris Caulfield)

Surrey asbestos pay-out to Epsom caretaker’s family

12 July 2023



The family of a former Epsom school caretaker has paid tribute to an ‘amazing’ husband and dad after lawyers recently secured them a settlement in connection with his asbestos-related cancer death.

Colin Bradley, was diagnosed with mesothelioma, a cancer of the lining of the lung associated with exposure to asbestos,

often decades previously.

Following his diagnosis, Colin, from Epsom, instructed asbestos-related disease specialists at Irwin Mitchell to investigate his illness and help him access the specialist treatment and care he required. However, he died aged 75 before he could see his case concluded.

The case was continued by Colin's son Darren Bradley, 53, in his dad's memory. His legal team has now secured a significant settlement from Surrey County Council in connection with Colin's mesothelioma.

Colin was employed by the local authority as a caretaker at Cuddington County First School from 1976 to 2003. The school is now Cuddington Primary School, run by the Howard Partnership Trust, who were not involved in the case against Surrey County Council - the defendant in the claim.

Surrey County Council admitted that the exposure Colin had to asbestos dust should not have happened, and conceded liability in his claim.

For this year's Workers' Memorial Day of 28 April, Darren joined the legal team to warn people of the ongoing danger posed by asbestos and to pay tribute to an 'amazing' dad who was taken from his family due to exposure to the hazardous substance.

Paul Ramsay, the asbestos-related disease specialist supporting Darren and his family, said: "The past few years have been incredibly difficult for Darren and his family. To face the distress of Colin's diagnosis and declining health due to mesothelioma has taken its toll on all of them.

"Colin was determined to get at the truth of his asbestos exposure and while nothing can bring Colin back to his family, the conclusion of the case and settlement gives them some closure and the answers they were looking for.

"However, Colin's death is also a stark reminder of the dangers still posed by asbestos, including in public buildings. While many people associate the use of asbestos with heavy industry its use was much more widespread, including in schools, hospitals, leisure centres and offices.

"Our own research shows that the presence of asbestos in public buildings, including schools continues to be a real concern throughout the country. In speaking out, Colin's family hope to make others aware of the risks of this material. This year's Workers' Memorial Day is an opportunity to remember workers like Colin and pause to reflect and remember all those who have been lost."

Before his death Colin believed he had been exposed to asbestos in the boiler room and various service areas whilst working at the school.

Colin had always been in good health and did not drink alcohol or smoke but began to feel unwell in August 2020, with a loss of energy and appetite.

After consulting his GP and being sent for tests, mesothelioma was diagnosed in December 2020. Colin began chemotherapy on 13 January, 2021, but his condition continued to deteriorate. He died six months after his diagnosis, on 22 June 2021.

Colin was married to Lorraine Bradley, 65, who is step-mum to Colin's sons, Darren, Mark and Simon Bradley.

Darren said: "All of our lives changed the day of dad's diagnosis. As he'd always led such an active and healthy lifestyle, it was hard to accept anything so serious could be wrong. The speed his illness progressed shocked us all.

"Dad was the central figure in our family, always there encouraging, supporting and looking after us all, even long into our own adult lives. His loss has left a huge void - and it is especially upsetting to see Lorraine left widowed and alone when they still had so much to look forward to in their retirement - but I take some comfort knowing that he would have been proud that we secured an admission of liability from his former employer.

"It's hard to imagine you could come across such a dangerous substance in a school environment and it's shocking to think it could still be there in other schools, posing a risk to others.

"I hope that by speaking about my amazing dad, we can reflect on how much we miss him every day, but also warn others of the dangers that still exist by coming into contact with asbestos. If we can help keep another family together or help make the argument for asbestos removal, dad's death won't have been in vain."

Workers' Memorial Day on 28 April remembers those who have died as a result of their employment, and campaigns to improve health and safety standards in the workplace and increase protection for employees.

Research undertaken by Irwin Mitchell suggests more than 4,500 public buildings across 20 of the UK's largest local authorities still contain asbestos, averaging at 225 buildings per authority.

Ultra-sound school kids

12 July 2023



Youngsters at **Ewell Grove Primary and Nursery School** have done it again. Back in the testing times of Covid during 2021, classes decided to organise their own entertainment programme to raise money for **Epsom Medical Equipment Fund** (EMEF), the charity launched in 1979 to help **Epsom General Hospital**.

This was the start needed to launch an appeal for the GE Ultrasound Scanner required by the Labour Ward theatre in Maternity at Epsom. With their parents backing them, they succeeded in raising nearly £1,000.

Last year they decided to repeat the feat - this time they brought a magnificent £1,132 which started the appeal off with a flying start.

This week the school was invited to present the GE Ultrasound scanner to **Dr. Dickson Osagie**. The school set the children a project to decide who would represent the school. There were eight lucky winners who visited the hospital with headteacher **Mrs Kate Keane**. "They were excited to learn the function of the Ultrasound scanner and how it works," said Mrs Keane.

Dr Osagie added "We were very lucky to have an ultrasound donated to us by EMEF. It is a £27,500 piece of equipment. The Labour Ward theatre did not have its own dedicated ultrasound for the anaesthetic team to use. Donating this machine has gone a long way in improving the care we give to pregnant women in the hospital as it will help us to be able to put in difficult cannulas, also when epidural for pain relief is difficult to perform, the ultrasound helps make this easier."

Excellence on ageing

12 July 2023



Between the two censuses of 2011 and 2021 the over 65 population of Epsom and Ewell increased by 16.1% to a total of about 14,670. About 18% of the total Borough population of about 81,000. As of 2021, Epsom and Ewell is the 12th most densely populated of the South East's 64 local authority areas, with around 17 people living on each football pitch-sized area of land. Surrey University is doing something about ageism.

Combatting ageism and promoting the interests of older people through scientific research is crucial, particularly as a response to the discriminatory treatment they faced during the pandemic, according to the Director of the University of Surrey's new Centre of Excellence on Ageing.

The University of Surrey's new centre is in partnership with the Global Initiative on Ageing (GIA), which operates under the auspices of the United Nations. The Centre was formally launched on 26 April 2023, with the University hosting a formal dinner that brings together notable scholars and stakeholders focused on ageing. This was followed by a one-day showcase on 27 April, celebrating Surrey's work in areas such as ageing and work, artificial intelligence and ageing, sleep patterns, nutrition, and generational shifts in ageing.

Professor **Max Lu**, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Surrey, said:

"The Surrey community is deeply passionate about improving the standard of wellbeing for our elderly population - this is evidenced in our internationally-recognised research activities in areas such as improving the quality of sleep of individuals living with dementia, improving inclusion of the elderly population in the tourism and hospitality sector, and investigating the mechanisms underlying osteoarthritis and finding ways to treat it.

"The new Centre of Excellence for Ageing will serve to amplify these efforts, allowing us to understand more and provide

genuine solutions that help to enrich the lives of our elderly relatives, friends, and fellow citizens while safeguarding their rights.”

More than 1.1 billion people worldwide are over 65 years of age; by 2050, the global population will be more than 2.1 billion.

GIA’s mission is to support the goals laid out within the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by improving the overall standard of living, participation and inclusion of the world’s ageing population. One of GIA’s key implementing partners is the UN’s Institute for Training and Research, UNITAR, which is dedicated to training and capacity building on a whole range of policy-based areas.

Professor **Paul A. Townsend**, the inaugural Director of the Centre of Excellence on Ageing and Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Surrey, said:

“I am incredibly proud to be part of our new Centre of Excellence on Ageing, which is a critical part of a global movement that recognises the need for a better understanding of the life course and ageing. We will focus on processes ranging from preconception through to appreciating the treatment of our elderly population. The pandemic disproportionately affected our seniors, leaving them to face discrimination and a lack of sympathy, with many left in care homes unable to see their families. This new Centre is dedicated to helping older people to benefit from the latest research and greatest advances in science today. They should receive the respect, care and quality of life that they deserve.”

Silvia Neira, Vice President of GIA, said:

“We are thrilled to announce the launch of the Centre of Excellence on Ageing at the University of Surrey. This new initiative will build on the incredible work of the GIA Foundation, expanding our capacity to research and engage with the many intersections of ageing and longevity.”

The Great Epsom Bike Off raises money for the Children’s Trust

12 July 2023



On Saturday 15th April, Epsom based PR agency, The Oracle Group, and its partner charity, The Children’s Trust, held **The Great Epsom Bike Off** at **The Ashley Centre** in Epsom raising an extraordinary figure of nearly £700. Inspired by the agency’s Chief Development Officer, **Clare Sanderson**, running the London Marathon 2023 to raise vitally-needed funds on Sunday 23rd April, the event saw the two organisations and members of the public cycle the distance of the London to Brighton Cycle Ride.

Leading multi-service communications agency, The Oracle Group chose The Children’s Trust as one of its charities of the year. The Children’s Trust is the UK’s leading charity for children with brain injury and neurodisability. Based in Tadworth, Surrey, it delivers rehabilitation, education and community services through skilled teams for children, young people and their families.

Throughout the event, volunteers took part in a challenge to cycle 54 miles on two bikes loaned by **Pure Gym Epsom**, to complete the distance of the London to Brighton Cycle Ride. Journalist and news presenter, **Nicholas Owen**, who is an ambassador of The Children’s Trust, also attended the event and helped the team reach the target mileage.

Supported by **GoEpsom** and **The Ashley Centre**, the event included a wide range of activities for the local community to enjoy including performances by young dancers from local dance school, the **Terri-Jayne School of Dance**. Visitors also enjoyed face painting by Bee Happy Facepainting, a Meet and Greet with Ashley Bear and The Children’s Trust’s Mascot, and lots of activities available on the children’s crafts table.

A group of children supported by The Children’s Trust came along to the event with their carers and families, enjoying the activities and dance performance. Throughout the day some of the families’ stories were shared on a big screen and a few who had previously been helped by The Childrens Trust also stopped by to enjoy the event.

Partnerships Manager **Kat Caddick** comments: “We are incredibly grateful to The Oracle Group for organising this brilliant event and to all of the organisations and individuals who have generously given their time and donations. Some of our amazing children and their families had a lovely time and it was a great opportunity to raise awareness of the work we do and why donations are so vital. We would also like to thank Clare for her brave commitment to running the marathon, the dancers from Terri-Jayne’s School of Dance, our face painter and GoEpsom.”

Clare Sanderson, Chief Development Officer at The Oracle Group comments: “We are delighted that this event has been such a success. We have been working hard over the past few months to plan today and couldn’t have done it without the generous donations and help from local businesses. The work that The Children’s Trust does is phenomenal and I am excited (and a bit apprehensive!) to run the marathon for them this weekend. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the charity throughout the year.”

The partnership has already seen The Oracle Group volunteer in The Children’s Trust’s charity shops in Reigate and Redhill, where two teams competed to raise the most money. Over £2,000 was raised on this day and more fundraising plans are in the pipeline for the rest of the year.

Surrey sleep specialists supported

12 July 2023



The **University of Surrey** has been awarded £1.7 million to further research into the sleep and circadian rhythms of people living with dementia.

Disturbed sleep is a common symptom for people living with dementia, but it is not known how and to what extent sleep disturbance exacerbates the disease.

Led by **Professor Derk-Jan Dijk**, the team at Surrey will expand their innovative programme of research that is using new technologies to non-invasively monitor and improve the sleep of dementia sufferers. The research is conducted in close collaboration with **Imperial College London** and the **Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust**, as part of the UK Dementia Research Institute (UK DRI).

Professor Derk-Jan Dijk, Director of **Surrey Sleep Research Centre** (SSRC), said:

“People living with dementia often have issues with sleep and, often, their memory is seemingly worse after a bad night. Good quality sleep is integral to our cognitive health, and now we need to test whether improving the sleep of those living with dementia will slow down the progression of the condition and preserve an individual’s memory for longer. To assist with this, we have the opportunity to use new technologies to both monitor and potentially improve the sleep of dementia sufferers over an extended period, in a way that is non-intrusive and supportive to people living with dementia and their carers.

“This award is invaluable in helping us to continue our work and I am grateful to the UK DRI, the Medical Research Council, Alzheimer’s Research UK and Alzheimer’s Society for making this possible.”

To learn more and ultimately improve the sleep of those living with dementia, researchers are applying digital health technologies that can sense movements and physiological signals of individuals whilst they sleep. This combined with mathematical modelling, machine learning, video analysis of sleep behaviour and molecular biomarker approaches, will yield a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between sleep, circadian rhythms, symptoms and disease progression in people living with dementia.

Professor Dijk added:

“A major advantage of the novel digital technologies we’re working with, many of which are contactless, is that they pose very little burden on the participant and can be used to monitor sleep and circadian rhythms in the home environment for weeks, months and years.”

The Surrey team will also continue to test new interventions to improve sleep. Interventions to be tested include changing brain oscillations through delivery of precisely targeted auditory stimulation during REM sleep (a sleep stage thought to be particularly important for brain function) or improving the light environment to boost circadian rhythms.

Professor Paul Townsend, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Surrey, said:

“Congratulations to Professor Dijk and the team of researchers from across the University in securing this fantastic award. This is testament to their hard work and dedication in this field.

“This year marks 20 years of the Surrey Sleep Research Centre which continues to go from strength to strength and cements our position as a global leader of sleep research.”

Fiona Carragher, Director of Research and Influencing at Alzheimer’s Society and a Surrey alumni, said:

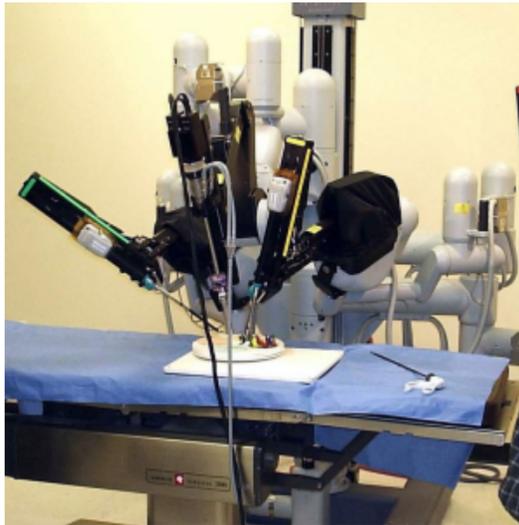
“As a founding partner and funder of the UK DRI, we are very proud of what the Institute has achieved since its launch in 2017. We congratulate everyone involved in placing it on the map as a global leader in dementia research and for the great impact it has had so far. This has included critical research into developing new diagnostic tools to ensure people living with dementia receive an early and accurate diagnosis, potentially giving them access to one of the disease-

modifying treatments we hope to see emerging from the clinical trials pipeline in the coming years.”

Surrey University Press Office

A different kind of cutting in Surrey's NHS?

12 July 2023



Robots will be performing more operations, including general surgery and gynaecology at a Surrey NHS hospital trust seeking to introduce “significant savings”, a board meeting heard.

The **Surrey and Sussex NHS trust** held its much delayed annual general meeting on Thursday, March 30, where attendees heard from its chairperson, chief executive, and head of finance.

The afternoon meeting, which board members suggested may have led to its lower than usual attendance, was broken into three sections: a review of the year, a run through of its financial health, and questions from the floor.

Chairperson Richard Shaw led off proceedings explaining the AGM should have taken place in autumn last year but was delayed because of the late filing of its 2021/22 audited accounts.

Chief executive **Angela Stevenson** told the meeting that the 2021/22 year was heavily influenced by the “significant impact” of covid with “very tired” staff “having to work under pressure”. This created a backlog the trust was only beginning to get back under control.

She said: “Staff were working with a disease that we didn’t know how to treat. We had high staff absences due to covid or due to family members having covid. Since then we’ve really got to grips with the backlog. We started to work through but at the start of 2022 these numbers were at their peak.”

Post pandemic, she said, there was a huge increase in patients seeking primary care compounded by the increase in “baseline complexity” as cases were left untreated during the pandemic.”

Ms Stevenson praised the trust for **delivering robotic surgery** for the first time and that it would be rolled out further to include general surgery and gynaecology services. They will also be investing in services with a new MRI department on the horizon - including new CT scanners at East Surrey and Crawley hospitals.

The trust also plans to work in partnership with other groups to better manage the health of the population rather than solely focus on its role as an acute hospital.

On finances, the meeting heard how its deficit continues to grow - even not including the covid years. It expects to run at a £26.5m deficit for 2022/23. This will be the first time the trust has run at a deficit since at least 2013/14 as spending pushes towards £400m a year.

Chief finance officer **Paul Simpson** said this could be partly attributed to an increase in staff costs. The hospital expects to take on an extra 130 new nurses. He said: “Now we have to recover the growth in costs that has happened and now we are (looking at) a significant savings plan.”

They were, however, quick to say “there should be no reason why we accept any reductions in quality of (care) for patients and that before any cuts were made there would be full impact assessments on cost improvement plans.”

Image: Nimur at the English-language Wikipedia CC BY-SA 3.0

Surrey's leader's life pledge for brain tumour research

12 July 2023



Surrey County Council's leader said his focus "for the rest of his life" will be fulfilling a promise made to his daughter before she died to fundraise for brain tumour research.

Emily Oliver was 21 when she died, 18 months after being diagnosed with a diffuse midline glioma, and after seeking medical advice "from across the world".

Her father, county council leader Councillor **Tim Oliver**, said the fund the family set up for her 21st birthday was now nearing £150,000 but vowed to continue to raise awareness and money.

He told the LDRS: "We promised Emily that we would do all that we could. We promised her that we would fundraise for what she wanted, specific research into her type of high grade glioblastoma. Hers was a very, very rare form.

"That is our focus and that will be our focus for the rest of our lives, to raise as much as we can and to find a research team that will look at predominantly her type [of brain tumour]."

Cllr Oliver said brain tumours didn't get the level of attention or funding as other types of cancer, because the number of cases was not as high, but said they were the biggest cause of cancer death for under 40s.

He said he and his wife, Debi, hoped to find a specific research project in the near future to give the money to. "It's really important to us that we continue to keep that alive and deliver on that promise to her," he added.

The council leader also has his sights set on creating a Surrey-wide bereavement service and has been having conversations about it with the chief executive at Surrey Heartlands and Surrey hospices.

He said "pulling together" the different organisations that offer support for both before and after death would help people know where to turn.

Cllr Oliver added: "I think that would be a great thing for people to be able to know where to go." He also praised the work of the **Brain Tumour Charity** and the support they give to families on what their journey may look like and understanding what their diagnosis actually meant.

He will take part in the **Princess Alice Hospice's** "Talk the Walk" event in April which aims to get men, in particular, to talk about bereavement.

Debi said: "The pain of her loss is with us every minute of every day, but Emily was passionate about fundraising to find a cure for brain tumours, and I absolutely know she would be really pleased that what she had started is being continued."

Cllr Oliver also called on the government to deliver on its promise of delivering £40million for research into brain tumours.

An inquiry by the **All-Party Parliamentary Group on Brain Tumours** was launched in 2021, and said that as of January 25 2023, just £15 million had been awarded since June 2018.

For advice and support from the Brain Tumour Charity, you can call its Support and Info Line on 0808 800 0004 or go to the website at: <https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/>

Image Tim Oliver credit Surrey Live

Life savers installed across the Borough

12 July 2023



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council have worked in partnership with national charity **Community Heartbeat Trust** to

install 12 new 24/7 defibrillators across the borough. The project was delivered with funding secured via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Defibrillators are designed to be used by members of the public with no previous experience in the event of someone going into cardiac arrest. They can, and do, save lives. The new defibrillators have been installed in the following locations:

- Market Place, Epsom
- Ebbisham Centre, Epsom Square, Epsom
- Town Hall (Rear entrance)
- Harold Bell Solicitors, 174 Kingston Road, Ewell
- St John's Parish Centre, Station Approach, Stoneleigh
- Auriol Park Café, Salisbury Road, Worcester Park
- The Parade Dental Practice, 177 Kingston Road, Ewell
- Ruxley Chemist, Ruxley Lane, Ewell Court
- Horton Pharmacy, Pelman Way, Epsom
- Horton Country Park, Horton Lane, Epsom
- Londis Convenience Store, Hollymoor Lane, Epsom
- NISA Convenience Store, Ruxley Lane

Councillor **Barry Nash**, who put forward the CIL bid, said, "After a lot of hard work by all involved, I am so pleased the defibrillator project has now been completed.

"I'd like to thank our partners from the Community Heartbeat Trust who shared their expertise with us, provided and installed all the defibrillators across the borough and will continue to provide a post-rescue counselling service."

Councillor **John Beckett**, Chair of the Environment and Safe Communities Committee, added, "You never know when a medical emergency may occur. Time can be extremely limited and having the right equipment on hand will save lives.

"The installation of these 12 new defibrillators will ensure the borough is prepared and our community is safer."

Image: Evacuationchairs - Own work. CC BY-SA 4.0