



Milton Keynes  
Hospital Charity

# Impact Report 2021-22







# Welcome

## Welcome to our 2021 Impact Report.

The team at Milton Keynes Hospital Charity are proud to have supported Milton Keynes University Hospital (MKUH) as its staff dealt with what was undoubtedly another very challenging year.

Our mission has always been to support patients, their families and the staff who care for them, and it is fair to say this was never more important than in this year.

The range of donations was amazing – from individuals, community organisations, schools, charities and businesses across Milton Keynes and its surrounding areas. We simply would not have been able to achieve all we did without the outpouring of love and generosity from our community.

This was humbling, so let us start this review with a very, very big thank you to everyone who helped in whatever capacity and with whatever amount.

Whilst the pandemic has brought heartache and hardship, it has also brought our charity closer to its community and has shown us how much support there is for us and our mission. We have made firm friends, established new partnerships and boosted our income.

This year has been a year of consolidation and planning. We have taken the time to review our governance procedures and policies and have approved a new three-year strategy – so in times of increasing uncertainty, we remain focussed and continue to deliver, particularly as we support MKUH in post-Covid recovery.

The charity's team remains small but we have risen to the challenge, funding some wonderful and impactful projects – state-of-the-art BabyLeo incubators, a Meaningful Activities Facilitator – and raising significant funds, including the team organising our first Golf Day at Woburn Golf Club.

None of our achievements would have been possible without your help, donations and fundraising – so thank you as always, for being so special and helping us make a difference.

“Our mission has always been to support patients, their families and the staff who care for them.”



# About us

## Milton Keynes Hospital Charity is the official charity for Milton Keynes University Hospital.

We want every patient at Milton Keynes University Hospital to have the best experience.

We raise funds to make a real difference to all who use our hospital services, working with Milton Keynes University Hospital to offer patients, their families and staff the best experience possible.

Our values focus on the following supporter promise:

- **Positivity** – our staff and volunteers will give you a cheerful, friendly welcome.
- **Inclusivity** – we will make everyone feel valued and important, and work collaboratively to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- **Kindness** – you'll be supported and inspired by people who care about you and why you give.
- **Accountability** – we won't let you down. We will create a culture of openness and honesty, where we manage your expectations and do what we say.

The Milton Keynes Hospital Charity team is a small but dedicated team with many years of expertise and experience between us.

This report highlights the impact of the charity's work and the difference it has made to our hospital community. In 2021/22 we raised £451,000 enabling us to support the hospital's patients and families, as well as staff.

We concluded one appeal– our Neonatal Unit BabyLeo Appeal.

We could never have achieved this without the remarkable efforts of fundraisers, donors, supporters, volunteers and dedicated staff.



# Where the money goes

This year we've spent a total of £540,000 to further the aims of our charity. Everything we do at the charity enhances the hospital experience for patients, families and staff.

Just some of the items we have funded over the past year include:

- Three state-of-the-art BabyLeo incubators for the neonatal unit
- Additional support to the children's respiratory team following a grant of £75,411 from the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Fund
- Baby keepsake boxes for parents to remember babies that have died suddenly and unexpectedly
- Garden furniture for the cancer centre garden
- The transformation of three staff rooms as part of the MKUH staff refurbishment programme
- Curation and management costs of the hospital-owned artwork and 'creative courtyard' gardens
- Tangle teaser hairbrushes for the nursing team to use on adult patients – the act of brushing is very relaxing and calming for patients
- Distraction and art-based materials for patients with learning disabilities
- Plants and gardening tools for the volunteer-maintained cardiology garden
- An ongoing supply of dietician-approved snacks for the Ward 25 (cancer centre) snack cupboard
- A special video Fiberscope for the theatres team to use when diagnosing young patients, creating a better, more pain-free experience

- An Accuvein "vein finder" for use primarily in Endoscopy, supporting the experience of cancer patients. Chemotherapy weakens veins, making it uncomfortable and time-consuming to take bloods – the vein finder uses a special light to highlight the vein so blood can be taken first time
- Toys and play equipment on our busy children's ward including craft materials and games consoles.

**We're proud of what we've achieved over this past financial year and could not have achieved any of this without the generosity – in time as well as money – of our donors, volunteers and supporters, so thank you.**



# Milton Keynes Hospital Charity

## in numbers

**£96,000**

spent on state-of-the-art kit



**£451,000**

raised in donations



**1 piano**  
purchased  
for staff and  
visitors to  
play in main  
entrance



We work  
with **5** charity  
partners to  
enhance  
patient  
experience

**14**

children aged  
under 3 supported  
at home with a  
respiratory physio  
rather than being  
admitted to hospital



**11** gardens  
looked after  
through the  
charity



**50%**  
50% reduction in length of  
stay due to our Meaningful  
Activities Facilitator role



**361** volunteer hours  
spent maintaining  
gardens and supporting  
services at MKUH

**3** staff rooms  
transformed  
thanks to  
NHS Charities  
Together  
funding



**5** patient  
day rooms  
enhanced



**27** wards and  
departments  
supported  
across MKUH

**£6,000**

in Gifts in Kind



**600+** patients  
and families  
supported via  
the Pastoral  
Support Worker



**10** training courses  
attended by staff  
to enhance patient  
care and experience



**100%**  
100% of children felt  
less anxious when  
using a charity funded  
VR headset before  
a procedure.

**420**

artworks curated





# Funding the best medical equipment

## Helping children in Theatres

This year we funded a new Fiberscope for young children and babies requiring additional airway support at MKUH. The tiny 3mm Fiberscope camera will be used to record images and video of the throat and lungs; invaluable in treating blockages in the airway and foreign objects in the lungs.

MKUH continues to see a rise in the number of surgeries for children, a proportion of which are known to have rare syndromes that make intubation challenging, so the fiberscope will provide a better picture to medical staff treating the children, as well as helping to prevent the need for additional procedures.

Dr Wassim Shamsuddin (pictured), a consultant anaesthetist at MKUH said: *"We are grateful to charity donors for helping us purchase this. These vital pieces of equipment help us to be able to effectively do our job and look after the children in Milton Keynes."*



## BabyLeo Incubators for our tiniest patients

Following our fundraising appeal in September 2021, funds were raised for three new 'BabyLeo' incubators, which are now in use on the neonatal unit. Their first patients were triplets, who you can see in the photo!

The BabyLeos are described as the 'Rolls Royce' of incubators and offer the latest in neonatal technology, featuring:

- More accurate, inbuilt weighing scales and a special heating system to maintain temperature at all times
- Special mechanisms allowing the baby's bed to be pulled out for parents to touch and hold their infant.

The BabyLeos can even be lowered for mums in wheelchairs, play music and allow personalisation of colour, too.

Lisa Viola, Matron of the Neonatal Unit, said: *"The BabyLeos are now greatly enhancing patient care and the experience of their families at MKUH. We're incredibly grateful, and on behalf of all of us here on the neonatal unit, thanks to everyone who donated or was involved in making the BabyLeos happen – it wouldn't be possible without your support."*



# Funding the best medical equipment

## Supporting Stroke Unit patients

Thanks to your donations, we've also been able to purchase mobile phone holders to help stroke patients increase their independence and keep in touch with loved ones. The gadgets, known as Goosenecks, allow patients to use their mobiles hands-free – vital when many often have limited use of one arm.

Nina Roberts, MKUH's specialist stroke advanced nurse practitioner says: *"The Goosenecks make such a difference to patients who are keen to use their mobile phones to Facetime or call family and friends, or to check their email or browse the internet. They easily hold a mobile giving the patient the option to use just one hand for texting. This is vital for stroke patients who may temporarily have limited use of one of their arms."*

Patient Christopher Howard is one of those who has benefited from this new gadget. *"It's been great to be able to have something like this to hold my mobile,"* he says. *"It gives me a lot more independence as I've currently got limited use on one side of my body. It's such a simple tool but makes life a lot easier."*



## VR Headsets

We were really pleased to fund a VR (Virtual Reality) headset in 2021, which was trialled on the children's ward.

Young patients wore the headset before a treatment or procedure and through VR, they could explore tropical beaches, underwater oceans and stars; step inside a colouring book and paint a scene, watch 3D movies and much more. We hoped this would significantly reduce anxiety levels in children.

The results were incredible. Following evaluation of its use on patients between the ages of 6 and 15 years:

**100%** felt less anxious as a direct result of using the headset before a procedure.

**97%** of patients registered no anxiety at all.

**100%** of parents felt that the VR headset was an effective way of reducing anxiety in children during procedures.

**100%** of parents strongly agreed or agreed that the VR headset reduced their child's perception of pain.

We'll now be looking to fund the headsets for other paediatric teams to use, including our community team.





# Enhancing the hospital environment

## Artwork in and around the hospital

This year we continued to fund the curation and management of the hospital's art collection as well as its courtyard gardens.

We have 420 pieces of artwork in and around the hospital, which bring great benefit to patients, visitors and staff.

The art collection in the hospital plays a big role in improving the health and wellbeing of hospital staff, patients, carers and visitors, by not only enhancing the environment and providing a pleasing distraction, but also by presenting works that explore the intersection between health, wellbeing, ageing, families and caring, and hospital/clinical spaces.

We are also very proud to work with the charity Arts for Health MK, to manage five courtyard gardens; creating peaceful spaces for patients, visitors and staff to visit and take time out from the ward.

## Beautiful garden for cardiology patients

Patients visiting our cardiology unit always comment on how beautiful the garden by the entrance looks throughout the year – and it's all thanks to Cardiology receptionist Gaynor, who solely maintains the space.

The garden has affectionately become known as "Gaynor's Garden."

The charity is privileged to have supported the garden through using donations to buy flowers and compost to keep it looking nice throughout the year.

## Cancer centre gardens

The three courtyards in the cancer centre provide a calming and peaceful space for patients, visitors and staff to spend time in. We continue to help maintain and look after the gardens by arranging volunteering visits and funding items to make them even nicer for visitors.



# Supporting MKUH staff

## Staff room refurbishment

Thanks to a grant of £88,000 from NHS Charities Together, we were able to contribute towards a Trust-wide staff room refurbishment programme; fully funding the transformation of three staff rooms, including Theatres and Wards 1 and 2 (now 2a and 2b).

These staff room refurbishments mean staff can take a break in a much nicer space. Throughout the programme, a detailed audit was carried out, and conversations were had with each and every ward and department about what they specifically needed – so refurbishments were tailored to the needs of that particular area.

Laki Yassin, Senior Sister for Ward 2 said: *"The overhaul of the staff room on the wards has been an incredible transformation. Having a dedicated, clean, comfortable and light space where colleagues can go to have a break is so important. Already we are seeing more and more staff members making the most of the facilities. All members of the team really appreciate the difference the project has made."*

Before



After



## Piano for main entrance

Following discussions with two very 'musical' consultants at MKUH – Dr Jamie Strachan and Dr Ivan Tang – the charity agreed to fund a piano for them to play music either between or after their shifts – particularly those late at night.

But the benefit was much wider, and we soon found visitors playing too, using the piano as a way to de-stress and take themselves out of the time spent at hospital.

Dr Jamie Strachan said: *"We all hope the art and the music give pleasure to staff, patients, relatives and visitors passing through the foyer of the main entrance of Milton Keynes University Hospital for many years to come."*



# Focus on... patient experience

## Funding a meaningful activities facilitator role

It has been an absolute privilege for us to support the hospital's first Meaningful Activities Facilitator – only two operate in the country – which has produced some exceptional results for our adult in-patients.

Helen, our Meaningful Activities Facilitator (MAF), enriches the experience for any adult patient who is perhaps feeling low in mood, having difficulty being in hospital, or needs some encouragement to support their wellbeing.

Helen works with patients of all kinds, especially those with a dementia diagnosis or with a lengthy hospital stay. She works on all wards offering a range of activities, from painting and clay work to creative group activities. After a year in post, she has had many positive reports on the difference the activities have made to the 250+ patients benefitting over the year.

We've had amazing outcomes – the role has ensured more engagement, reduced loneliness and continued mobility, prevented decline and promoted faster recovery with patients; seeing a 50% reduction in time on the ward when supported by Helen.

"I would recommend (meaningful activities) as it put me at ease in a stressful environment and helped me get through the difficult times as I was learning new things such as different techniques, strokes and patterns in watercolour painting. This made the time go faster when I was in hospital and I have found another hobby that I didn't realise I would have enjoyed. Thank you, Helen!"

- a younger patient Helen has visited.

"Often, being a patient can be incredibly boring and having something to stimulate your mind can really make a difference to your wellbeing, especially when you are unwell", says our MAF, Helen. "Getting the chance to meet new faces can also give people a bit of a lift, so it's a lovely role. You really feel that you are making a difference to the patient's day".





# Focus on... patient experience

## Funding pastoral support

One of our priorities as a charity is to enhance the experience our patients receive whilst spending time in hospital. Thanks to charitable donations we have made this happen by supporting the special role of Pastoral Support Worker.

Anne-Marie (pictured) is the Pastoral Support Worker, based within the MKUH chaplaincy team. Since starting in July 2021 she has provided care and support for more than 600 patients, their families and MKUH staff.

Anne-Marie's role triages referrals and queries that come into the team. This might include liaising directly with a patient or relative or speaking to another team on behalf of the patient e.g. palliative care or the frailty team. Anne-Marie can then provide support and information.

Just a few examples of how the Pastoral Support Worker supports patients and relatives include:

- **Visiting patients** – particularly older patients – when they are feeling isolated or lonely. This could be by playing cards with them, sitting with patients and listening to them talk about their family to ease loneliness and bring a smile – or simply holding their hand.
- **Helping patients with tech** - in one specific case, when a patient was struggling to use the iPad that had been given to her, Anne-Marie printed and laminated instructions for the patient on how to use and charge it.

Charitable donations have helped make this happen and brought comfort or a smile to many patients, relatives and staff members. It wouldn't be possible without the help of our donors and fundraisers.



# Focus on VCSE Health and Wellbeing Grant

Back in November 2021 the charity was awarded £75,411 from the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Fund to support the MKUH children's respiratory team.

This grant meant that our charity could help the hospital provide extra support to young children under 3 and their families in and around Milton Keynes over the winter, as the number of young patients admitted to hospital with respiratory viral infections continued to surge. The grant supported the children's respiratory service by directly funding:

- Two additional respiratory nurses
- A part-time respiratory physiotherapist
- A Helpline available Monday to Friday 8:30am-4:30pm
- Administrative support
- Eight information leaflets for parents in English as well as four different translations – Dari, Tamil, Urdu and Polish.
- Additional external provision, including schools across Milton Keynes.

To make this grant happen the charity team worked closely with Lorna Bass, the children's respiratory lead at MKUH (pictured).

Lorna said: *"With the anticipated influx in respiratory patients, the grant helped us further meet the demand by increasing our service size. It also helped improve patient and family experience – ultimately, reducing hospital admissions and providing better access to community support."*



"We feel more supported now when discharged from hospital, having a number to call for support and advice".

*A parent of 6-month-old bronchiolitis*

"Really good idea we have never been offered this training before and we tend to manage from personal experience rather than real knowledge".

*Headteacher from a local school*

## Key outcomes

Increased confidence in family/carers supporting children with respiratory issues due to tailored care plans, the Helpline and educational materials.

Increased Helpline support for those admitted to or previously supported with a respiratory issue – 44% of calls resulted in an admission avoidance.

14 children received at home physio sessions, to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.

Four patients had prolonged admissions avoided (usually up to 6-week admissions).

Two end of life patients supported and made more comfortable due to the respiratory physio, which was not previously offered.

# A Better Future

Every penny we receive is helping to give patients at Milton Keynes University Hospital the chance of a better future.

Whether it's supporting our mission generally, helping us save for major upcoming projects or allowing us to raise more money for the hospital's future plans.

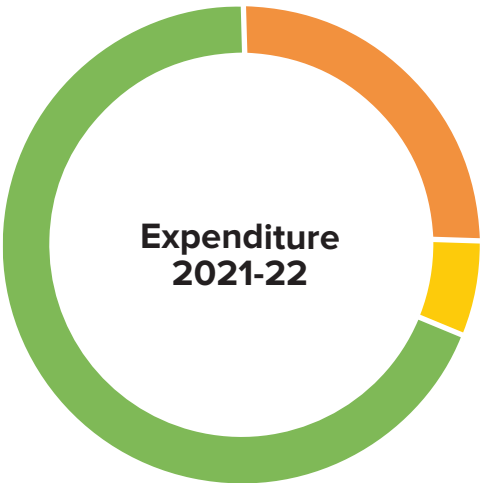
Over the past year we've spent £382,000 on patient care and experience, including the projects we've talked about and shared with you in this report. Our fundraising and staff costs for the same period came in at £128,000.



“Every penny we receive is helping to give patients at Milton Keynes University Hospital the chance of a better future.”



- Donations
- Legacies
- Grants
- Other



- Raising funds
- Ensuring good governance
- Patient and staff experience



# Our Supporters

## Charity Partners

We're delighted to work closely with five charity partners, supporting patients, families and staff at Milton Keynes University Hospital – the Friends of Milton Hospital and Community, Emily's Star, the Henry Allen Trust, Als Pals and Samuel's Charity.

This year we'd like to highlight the work of Al's Pals, who have been supporting MKUH since March 2020.

Al's Pals is a cancer charity supporting patients and their families with emotional and practical support in the hospital, at home, online and in the community. Their volunteers chat to patients and families in the cancer centre ensuring that they feel supported all day every day.

(Quote from CEO Suzanne Brown) *"After my dad Alan passed from cancer, we found this a really tough journey as a family and my dad wanted to ensure that no one else felt alone. I made this his legacy and we have gone from strength to strength. MKUH have welcomed our volunteers and we now support the many patients that walk through the door of the cancer centre."*



**al's pals**

Supporting cancer patients and their families  
in hospital, at home, online and in the community.



## Our Supporters

We're so grateful to each and every one of the individuals, groups, companies, schools and organisations that support us.

One such supporter is Darren (pictured above) who did a sponsored walk in the Summer to say thank you for his care.

*"The care and kindness shown by all was and still is brilliant. From the lady that made tea, the cleaning staff, nurses and Mr Dungawalla - the staff are brilliant. Nothing was too much trouble. I'm a lucky, lucky man to still be here and a lot of that luck is down to you all. Thank you."*

We are also so grateful to MKUH staff who fundraise. In the summer of 2021, a team of paediatric ED nurses led by nurse Claire Petford completed a 25-mile walking challenge around Milton Keynes dressed as Disney Characters. They raised a phenomenal £11,497.50 for their department and have purchased a state of the art distraction kit with the monies raised.



# Keeping in touch

None of these amazing projects and items could have been funded over the past two years without the generosity of our local community.

We'd like to give a huge thank you to everyone who has donated, taken on a challenge or promised future support through a gift in their Will. If you would like to know more about how you can help our charity to continue its important work at Milton Keynes Hospital Charity, please visit our website or get in touch.



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