

New staff reflective gardens and free media services for patients at UHNM

Patients at the University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust can access free media services, and staff can now spend breaks in a reflective garden with a ‘memory tree’, paid for by the trust’s charity. Awareness of the charity and its aims are being promoted on the homepage of the SPARK Media platform by WiFi SPARK.

Reflective gardens with a ‘memory tree’ containing the names of colleagues and loved ones who have died during the past year have been created by the University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust (UHNM). Both the Royal Stoke University Hospital, in Stoke-on-Trent, and County Hospital, in Stafford, now have gardens where staff can spend breaks in quiet contemplation. Five staff members have died in past 12 months – four due to Covid-19; their names and those of relatives who have also died, have been engraved on the metal trees.

Lisa Thomson, director of communications and charity at UHNM, said: “The coronavirus pandemic has been continually stressful every day for more than a year, for patients, their families and our staff. UHNM’s charity has been well-supported through the goodwill of the public, so we wanted to use some funds to help make things a little easier for everyone who stays, visits or works here. The memory trees in the reflective gardens will hopefully bring some comfort to staff as they remember colleagues and loved ones.”

The charity is also funding free online entertainment and media services for patients via the SPARK Media platform provided by WiFi SPARK. Services such as TV, radio, films, games, newspapers, magazines, and access to NHS videos and therapy apps, will also be available on phones and tablets, when the platform goes live in the coming weeks. The new installation of the SPARK Media platform follows the successful roll-out of WiFi in the trust, by WiFi SPARK in 2020; WiFi and entertainment services are free of charge for patients, visitors and staff, and are fully supported with a 24/7/365 service desk.

“We know that during the pandemic, patients have suffered greatly from having little or no contact with their families and friends, so being able to speak to them via video calls is a boost to morale,” said Thomson. “By providing free WiFi and now with new media services being made available, these entertainment options can help pass the time in hospital and aid patient recovery.”

The SPARK Media platform can be customised to a trust’s requirements, and for UHNM, a link to its charity is found on the homepage. The charity has other initiatives it provides for patients and staff, including screens on the ceilings of its critical care and radiology units, which play sky scenes.

“There are no windows in these wards and so there is no natural light,” added Thomson. “Having sky scenes playing with sunshine and rolling clouds emulates daylight and can help prevent delirium in patients, and it provides a nicer working environment for staff as well.”

Gaining support for the charity via the SPARK Media platform will help it to continue to provide services and initiatives to improve patients’ experiences and staff wellbeing.

Dean Moody, chief commercial officer at WiFi SPARK, said: “Charities are an invaluable part of NHS trusts, and UHNM’s is providing some great ideas for patients and staff. The past year has been incredibly difficult for many people, so any services that aid patient recovery

or make staff working conditions a bit easier have to be welcomed. We are pleased to be part of that philosophy at UHNM.”

WiFi SPARK is a leading provider of commercial WiFi and media services to the healthcare, retail, transport, sport and exhibition space sectors. The company works with nearly 300 hospitals across more than 80 NHS trusts and health boards in the UK. It provides 24/7 support to customers.

Notes for editors

About: WiFi SPARK

WiFi SPARK is the leading provider of guest and patient-access WiFi in the UK. The company is the owner and developer of the unique SPARK® Platform which delivers the most flexible, feature-rich and scalable solution for guest-access WiFi on the market today.

WiFi SPARK specialises in WiFi in the healthcare sector and provides services to over 50% of the NHS Acute Trusts. WiFi SPARK has recently launched SPARK® Media, a revolution in patient entertainment, delivering TV, radio, educational content and more directly to the patients' device of their choice.

No other wireless network provider can offer the same adaptability, span of features, and ultimately, return on investment.

About University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust Charity:

UHNM Charity is a registered charity which provides funds to enable University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust to purchase state-of-the-art medical equipment and to enhance and improve patient experience and comfort at County Hospital in Stafford and Royal Stoke University Hospital in Stoke-on-Trent. The charity also funds additional training for staff and research programmes. The charity exists to enable patients and their loved ones to thank the staff and hospitals for the care given to them and, on their behalf, aims to help UHNM provide the very best treatment, care and experience for its patients now and in the future.

UHNM Charity is the trust's chosen charity because all of the funds raised for, or donated to the charity, go directly towards improving the care and experience of people who use the services that the hospitals provide. The trust relies on the charity to pay for equipment, comforts, education and research which would not otherwise be provided by the NHS. The majority of our supporters either have, or will in the future, use the services provided at the hospitals or know someone who has. By donating to UHNM Charity you are helping us to achieve our aim of supporting UHNM to become one of the top university teaching hospitals in the UK by 2025 and establish a world-class reputation by 2030.

About University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust:

Each year UHNM cares for over two million people who come to us for emergency treatment, planned operations and medical care. UHNM has two sites, the Royal Stoke University Hospital, located in Stoke-on-Trent and County Hospital, in Stafford. We are a teaching hospital in partnership with Keele University and we have a patient-centred clinical research facility providing state-of-the-art facilities.

We provide a full range of general acute hospital services people living in Staffordshire and beyond and specialised services, such as trauma, for three million people in a wider area, including neighbouring counties and North Wales. Our specialised services include cancer diagnosis and treatment, cardiothoracic surgery, neurosurgery, renal and dialysis services,

neonatal intensive care and paediatric intensive care. We are also recognised for our particular expertise in trauma, respiratory conditions, spinal surgery, upper gastro-intestinal surgery, complex orthopaedic surgery, laparoscopic surgery and the management of liver conditions with some of the most modern operating theatres in Europe.

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