

YOUR HOSPITAL, YOUR CHOICE

September 2008



Another year at the top for the Countess

The Countess of Chester Hospital has gone from strength to strength during the last year with a number of significant service developments and capital investments which will help the Trust to continue providing a high quality of service to patients.

The Trust's key achievements during the last year include achieving the new 18 weeks target nine months ahead of the national deadline, treating 17,000 more patients and reducing MRSA infections.

Please see inside to read all about how your hospital of choice is developing its services for you.



Inside:

Trust wins
40Top Hospi-
tals Award for
8th year in a
row



How home
comfort can
speed up
recovery



Moonlight
Walk 2008
raises £65k



Fertility breeds quality

The Fertility and Assisted Conception Unit provides a full range of investigations and treatments (both NHS and self funded) for infertility management. The Unit has recently achieved the ISO9001:2001 quality management certificate, highlighting the efficient and high quality systems and standards that the department has in place for all patients and staff that access the unit.

On achieving the demanding status of being ISO certified, Women & Children's Service Manager, Hayley Thompson, said: "The Fertility and Assisted Conception Unit Team worked extremely hard to set up a full quality management system which controls everything that happens within the department.

It ensures standardisation across all treatments and clinicians, and provides a robust system for non-conformances and corrective actions. We also had to develop a vision, mission statement, key performance indicators and a quality policy for the service direction and what we wanted to achieve for both patients and staff."



Home comfort speeds up recovery

The Trust is currently running a pilot scheme which allows patients to leave hospital early and receive follow up care at home during their recovery process.

Launched as a one year pilot scheme earlier in the year, the Trust's Orthopaedic Outreach Team allows patients who are deemed to be well enough, to be discharged early from hospital to receive follow up care in the comfort of their own home.

Rather than staying in hospital for a long period of time, orthopaedic trauma and elective patients undergoing treatment to their hips or knees for example, can be discharged after a reasonable period and are then followed up by routine daily house calls to aid their recovery.

Delays in discharging patients can lead to an extensive shortage of beds for the Trust which reduces the flow of patients through the hospital. The Countess formed the Orthopaedic Outreach Team to reduce the length of stay of patients who are well enough to be discharged. It is estimated that on average the team can continuously manage the early discharge of 9 patients per week.

The team consists of a nurse co-ordinator, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, and three rehabilitation carers. The help and care given can be anything from helping to make a meal, assisting patients when getting out of bed and getting dressed in the morning, as well as continuous rehabilitation support to maximise a patient's mobility and independence following surgery.

Clinical Lead for Therapy Services, Alison Swanton, said: "This service not only benefits patients who are in hospital for a shorter time, but it also frees up beds for the Trust



where there would otherwise be a shortage. It means that once they have recovered from their operation patients can receive their Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy at home and have the additional comfort of knowing that they can receive extra support at home for making meals, getting dressed and negotiating stairs etc."

The team also help to reassure patients as they have regular contact with clinical professionals, allowing them to live more freely. Alison explains: "If something happens to a patient and they feel worried or are scared during the rehabilitation process, they know they can mention it to one of the team."

During the first three months of the pilot scheme 57 patients benefited from the service by being discharged early and receiving additional care from the team at home.

Photograph shows the Trust's Orthopaedic Outreach Team surrounding patient, Robert Lyall. The team consists of (Left to Right): Emma Humphrey (OT), Joanne Jones (front, navy blue) (Orthopaedic Outreach Co-ordinator), Rebecca Mulvey (Social Care Assessor), Tracie Pritchard (Therapy Assistant), Nicola Bostock (Therapy Assistant), Loretta Davies (Physio), Margeret Mitchinson (Therapy Assistant).

Nurse Jenny finishes Texas scholarship

Jenny Booth, a Tissue Viability Nurse at the Trust has recently returned from Texas, USA where she carried out a wound care scholarship in VAC therapy.

VAC Therapy has been used at the Countess for the past ten years and it has proved to be revolutionary in the treatment of healing wounds.

Jenny travelled to the global headquarters of

KCI, Texas, where she had the opportunity to develop her practise and share experiences with leading US experts and as one of only six scholarships awarded, Jenny was the only nurse representing the North of England.

Jenny said: "It was a fantastic experience whereby exchanges of clinical expertise were shared and new friendships made."



Pushing the boundaries of innovation

Touch screen check-in service is a hit with patients

The Trust's newly installed Patient Touch Screens are proving to be a huge hit with patients and staff.

The Trust's Outpatient departments have seen a significant improvement in the patient appointment check-in process due to the touch screens. Up until recently, lengthy queues meant that it could take a long time for a patient to check-in with Outpatients reception - mainly due to the time consuming nature of confirming personal details.

The result of the initial trial which was run by the Trust's award winning IM&T department was a resounding success. Check-in times reduced by 75% and the patients remarked that they enjoyed using the Patient Touch Screens.



The machines have now been installed in Outpatient departments across the Trust, allowing patients to check-in and verify their Countess of Chester Hospital patient record. The patient confirms personal information and if it is all correct they receive a ticket that can be handed to a receptionist, allowing them to immediately sit down in the waiting area.

RemindMe service hits 12,000 mark

The Trust's hugely popular patient RemindMe email and text messaging service which was launched to reduce missed appointment rates, has generated over 12,000 subscribers since its launch.

Each year, around 25,000 hospital appointments at the Countess are wasted by patients who fail to inform the Trust that they will not be attending and this costs the Countess ap-

proximately £1.75 million per year – money which could otherwise be invested in patient care.

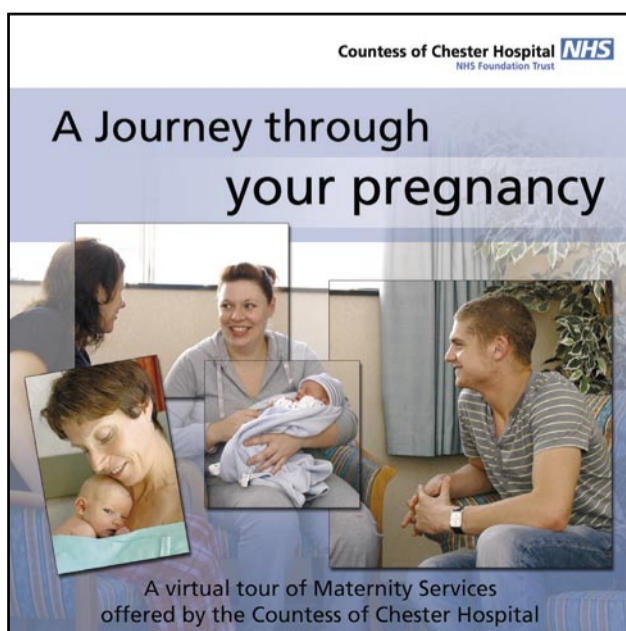


This innovative service further demonstrates why the Trust's IM&T team won the BT e-Health 'Acute Care ICT Team of the year' award. Project Co-ordinator, Kirsty Nield, said: "To have over 12,000 patients subscribing to the RemindMe service during the last year is a fantastic achievement and one which benefits the Trust significantly by reducing missed appointments. We hope to achieve results as impressive as this in the next year."

Virtual tour educates expectant parents

As part of a new educational programme to support expectant parents who have chosen to deliver at the Trust, the Countess of Chester Hospital has produced a DVD virtual tour of the Maternity Unit, which was recently premiered at the hospital.

Qualified NCT antenatal teachers will lead the course programme – entitled 'Preparation for birth and early parenthood' - giving parents the opportunity to ask questions and make informed decisions about labour and birth.



The package - devised by the Parent Education Co-ordinators - includes a DVD called 'A Journey Through Your Pregnancy' which was filmed and edited in-house by Jo Richardson, Corporate Design & Medical Illustration Manager for the Trust with the co-operation of local mums and their families. This DVD is a virtual tour of the Maternity Unit, promoting the exceptional services and facilities it offers to parents.

It is hoped that the DVD will provide a valuable experience, as it guides the viewer through the entire maternity experience, both antenatally & postnatally until discharge from the midwife. The DVD also minimises the risk of infection within the hospital due to a reduced number of people entering and leaving the Maternity Unit.

Infant Feeding and Parent Education Co-ordinator, Janet Beech, said of the DVD tour: "We are really delighted to be able to offer this innovative virtual tour of the maternity facilities at the Countess, which will benefit all the mums and families who choose to deliver here." Carmel Healey, Head of Midwifery, added: "This is a very exciting development for the Countess and will enable our midwives to focus on providing even better antenatal care and supporting women through labour."

Consultant becomes Vice President

Linda de Cossart, Consultant General and Vascular Surgeon at the Countess was recently elected to the position of Vice President of the Royal College of Surgeons for England at a council meeting.

Linda's appointment to the position is not only an achievement in itself but is made all the more significant due to the fact that she becomes only the 5th female executive member to be elected in the 208 year listing of the college.

On being appointed to the role, Linda said: "As well as for myself, this is a great honour for the North West and Chester as this is the first college election of an executive member in the North West."

With co-author Della Fish, Linda has also published two books; "Cultivating a Thinking Surgeon", and "Developing the Wise Doctor".



Another year at the

Key achievements during the last year

- The Trust won a prestigious 40Top Hospitals Award for the eighth consecutive year, one of only five Trusts in the country to achieve this status.
- 17,000 (4.3%) more patients were treated compared to the previous year.
- We reduced healthcare acquired MRSA infections to just 12 cases, a 47% reduction from the previous year.
- We achieved the new 18 week target 9 months in advance of the national deadline.
- £3.3m was spent on replacing medical, information technology and other equipment to improve the patient environment.

“The financial performance of the Trust was excellent with a £4.5m surplus achieved to support the future investment in the capital infrastructure of the Trust.”

Sir Jim Sharples – Chairman

Modernising our hospital and facilities

The strong financial performance of the Trust has enabled it to fund its £10m per annum capital investment programme.

A major part of this capital investment is the multi-million pound investment to refurbish ward areas throughout the hospital, a project which is now underway. Consultation with both patients and members of the public was extensive and the first refurbished ward, Ward 48, opened to patients in May.

Refurbishment is currently being carried out to Ward 49 as is the £2m investment into developing the Paediatric Unit which is expected to open in April 2009. The purpose built fully integrated Children’s Unit will deliver improved patient care, improved cubicle facilities such as additional toilets and bathrooms, and a relaxing modern, environment for children and their parents / guardians.



This is an exciting time for the hospital as it is the first time such a major refurbishment programme has been possible since the hospital first opened over 20 years ago. The scheme will enable the Trust to improve patient facilities by increasing the number of side rooms, toilets and bathrooms in the ward areas.

At the start of the process, we invited our patients, both past and present, together with members of the public to share their experiences of their stay in hospital. These experiences were then used to inform the design work which followed. It is our main objective to ensure the refurbishment reflects the wishes and needs of our patients.

“To enable our continued growth the Trust will invest its accumulated surplus and other capital resources in expanding our capacity and improving operational efficiency to enhance the quality of the hospital facilities.”

Peter Herring – Chief Executive

Investing in the future

The Trust utilises its freedom as a Foundation Trust to improve the infrastructure and ensure the most modern equipment and technology is available for patient care. Over the previous four years we have reinvested surpluses, reinvested retained depreciation and exploited opportunities to obtain public dividend capital with the aim of providing the best possible environment. During 2007/08 £7.6m was invested in capital assets. Although the Trust has a borrowing limit of

£31.3m this was not required to finance the capital investment strategy which was funded in full from the Trust’s internally generated resources.

Providing excellent service growth to our patients

The Trust treated 17,000 more patients than the previous year which shows a 4.3% increase and the number of patients waiting for an elective procedure or outpatient appointment was reduced by 22%.

In addition, the average time patients waited to be operated upon reduced by 20% to an average of 8 weeks.

We also invested in improving the quality of services provided to patients through:

- £253,000 in additional cleaning services
- £200,000 in critical care medical staff
- £40,000 in cancer clinicians

“Our market position continues to strengthen with increasing numbers of patients wishing to use our services and we have the potential to extend the scope and range of our services even further.”

Peter Herring – Chief Executive

top for the Countess

Surpassing national targets and standards

The Trust achieved the new 18 week target for the maximum time a patient waits from referral to treatment 9 months in advance of the national deadline. In addition, improvements in waiting times for Welsh residents were commissioned by Flintshire Local Health Board.

The Trust was reaccredited at the level 3 (best possible) of the National Health Service Litigation Authority (NHSLA) general standards – one of only 10 Trusts in the country to hold this.

Maternity standards gained accreditation at level 2 and the Trust aims to achieve level 3 in 2009.

Virtually 100% of patients with suspected cancer were treated within the 31 and 62 day national targets.

“Our high clinical standards were once again recognised with our eighth consecutive 40Top Hospitals Award, one of only five Trusts in the country to achieve this.”

Sir Jim Sharples – Chairman

Improving waiting times for patients

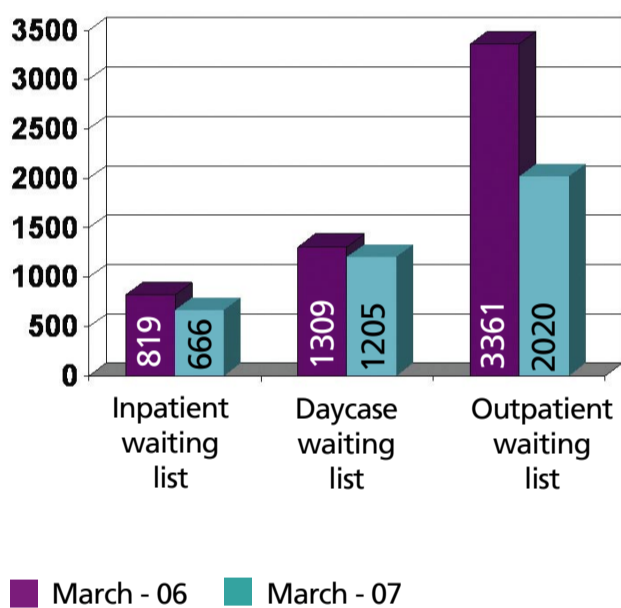
The drive towards the new waiting time target resulted in a significant reduction in the numbers of patients waiting at any one time, and average waiting times. By the year end in respect of English patients:

- 89% of admitted patients were treated within 18 weeks of referral (national target is 90% by December 2008).
- 96% of non-admitted patients were treated within 18 weeks from referral (national target is 95% by December 2008).

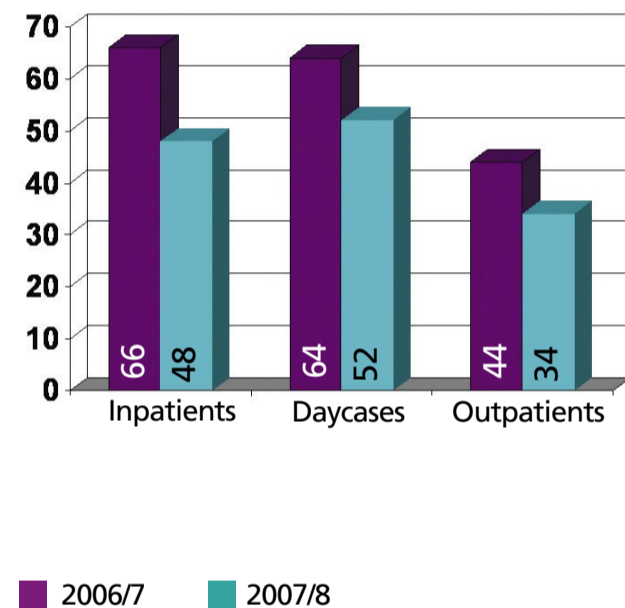
As a result the Trust significantly reduced the overall number of patients waiting for an inpatient, daycase and outpatient appointment.

In addition delivery of the target led to a further reduction in average waiting times from those achieved in earlier years.

Numbers of English residents on waiting list



Average waiting times for English residents (days)



Sandra becomes first Nurse Consultant in the region

A nurse at the Countess of Chester Hospital is the first person to be appointed to the post of Nurse Consultant at the Trust, which is also the first role of its kind in the region.

Sandra Flynn qualified as a registered general nurse in 1983 and in 1986 trained in Orthopaedic nursing at the Orthopaedic Hospital in Oswestry. She has worked in the speciality of Orthopaedics for 25 years and her new role involves undertaking expert clinical practice, leadership, education and research.

Sandra gained an MSc in Professional Practice at the University of Chester in 2005 and is currently entering her third year of study for a PhD entitled 'Patients' perceptions of care and caring'. Sandra has also had several journals published and has written a chapter in a new book called Key Concepts in Nursing.

On being appointed to the role of Nurse Consultant in Elective Orthopaedic Surgery, Sandra said: "I feel extremely honoured to be appointed to this prestigious post not only for myself but also for the Countess of Chester Hospital. In particular I wish to acknowledge my nursing and consultant colleagues who have supported me over recent years and enabled me to develop my expertise within the field of orthopaedics."

Jeanette Kendrick, Head of Nursing and Deputy General Manager of the Surgical Division added: "We are very pleased regarding Sandra's appointment, she has a wealth of clinical and expert knowledge and I am sure she will continue to make an invaluable contribution to the Orthopaedic service here at the Countess of Chester Hospital and we wish her well in her new role".



Jeanette Kendrick (Head of Nursing and Deputy General Manager of the Surgical Division), and Sandra Flynn (Nurse Consultant in Elective Orthopaedic Surgery)

Charity walk is a midnight success

The Countess of Chester's Moonlight Walk 2008 was a huge success, raising money for the Trust's new fundraising appeal – Relative Comfort and the General Fund.



Dressed in colourful outfits, over 600 women fought fatigue and the horrible weather to complete the 13 mile walk in the early hours of Sunday 22nd June, after a midnight start on the Saturday.

This year's Moonlight Walk, combined with the previous two have now raised in excess of £265,000 for appeals within the hospital. Money raised this year will go towards Relative Comfort – the new appeal which will provide accommodation for relatives of patients on the Critical Care Unit. The Countess' Fundraising Manager, Kate Taylor commented on the event's ongoing success by saying; "This event has raised over a quarter of a million pounds over the last three years and it was great to witness the ladies' ongoing commitment to the event. They were really brave to complete the walk, especially with the horrible weather conditions and the money they helped to raise will be greatly used for the new appeal."



If you would like to make a donation to the Relative Comfort appeal or any one of our many other funds, please contact the Fundraising Team on 01244 366397 or email kate.taylor@coch.nhs.uk.

Cardiology team offers new pacemaker service

The Cardiology team recently introduced a new pacemaker implanting service. The new service offers permanent pacemaker implants and will include pacing reviews and box changes when appropriate.

In addition, since early September the Cardiology department has begun repatriating the Trust's review patients who were originally referred to the Cardiothoracic Unit at Liverpool & Broadgreen University Hospital Trust, prior to the service being available at the Countess. It is the Trust's intention, over a three year period that approximately 450 review patients will be brought back to the Countess.

The new implant service will take place within the Catheter Lab and the review clinics will be undertaken by the Cardio Respiratory team. The pacemaker implants will initially be led by Consultants Dr Jason Causer and Dr John Somauroo – who have received advanced re-training for all procedures. However all Consultants in the Cardiology department will eventually be trained to perform the service in the long term.



Service Manager for Acute Directorate, Division of Medicine, Karen Townsend, said of the new service: "We are very pleased to be able to offer this service to new and existing patients who have previously been required to visit Liverpool & Broadgreen for treatment. From the initial pacemaker implant, to monthly and annual reviews as well as box changes after approximately five years, it is essential that patients receive a long term quality service. With this in mind our Consultants have undergone and will continue to undergo specialist training in order to offer the best care available."

Thanks for the service

To celebrate 60 years of the NHS the centre piece of the Countess of Chester's celebrations was the Service of Thanksgiving and Celebration, at Chester Cathedral on Sunday 6th July.



The service was a great success and included biblical and secular readings as well as music from Chester Music Society, the Cheshire Police Band and Chester Primary Schools Choir.

Foundation Trust Secretary Stephen Cross said: "We were delighted that such a variety of groups were represented at the service, both NHS and non NHS. The service was a fantastic opportunity to recognise the Health Service that we are fortunate to have in this country. We were especially pleased to welcome back to Chester the Very Revd Stephen Smalley, the Dean of Chester from 1987-2001, who made a fantastic address. Stephen is well known and loved in Chester and many people were grateful to hear him again."

Bare below the elbows

The Countess is continuing its 'Zero Tolerance to Healthcare Associated Infections' policy by adopting a new Department of Health initiative which was recently introduced to improve hand hygiene by ensuring that any member of staff with direct patient care should be Bare below the elbows.

The Bare below the elbows guidelines state that:-

- Sleeves should be short or rolled up
- No jewellery should be worn on hands except wedding bands. Watches and bracelets should also be removed.
- Ties, if worn, should be tucked securely into the shirt, or pinned, or be beneath a disposable apron.
- Long sleeved white coats should not be worn.

Dr Virginia Clough, Medical Director and Director of Infection Prevention and Control, said: "The Countess follows a policy entitled 'Zero Tolerance to Healthcare Associated Infections' and already this year we are seeing a fall in such infections. Meticulous attention to hand hygiene and our "bare below the elbows" conduct is part of this policy. I believe that the image of our clinical staff is very important and want to reassure our patients and the public that we are doing everything we can to make this issue a top priority in the Trust."



Dr Simon Greenwood with a patient

40Top Hospitals Award for eighth year in a row

Over 150 Chief Executives, Chairs, Medical Directors and other senior NHS Managers gathered at the Tate Britain in London for the CHKS Top Hospitals Conference and Awards Dinner earlier this year. Now in its eighth year, the Top Hospitals Programme celebrates the success and good performance of the NHS acute sector.

The Countess of Chester Hospital received a 40Top Hospitals Award for the eighth year in succession, one of only five Trusts in the country to achieve this. The awards have only been in existence for eight years meaning that the Countess have successfully received the award every year since it was comprised in 2001.

Dr Virginia Clough, Medical Director at the Countess said, "We are delighted to be recognised as one of the country's leading hospitals for the eighth year in succession. Our staff work incredibly hard to enable us to offer the best

and safest care for our patients. As one of only five Trusts in the entire country to obtain this award eight times we are in a very select group, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to focussing on patient care."

Commenting on this year's performance, CHKS Chief Executive, Graham Harries, said "The 40Top Hospital Awards recognise excellence amongst our clients and are based on the evaluation of 20 key performance indicators covering clinical effectiveness, health outcomes, efficiency, patient experience and quality of care. Good news stories in the NHS are often overshadowed and we are proud to be able to highlight and reward some of the best practice and excellent work done in the NHS".



Channel 4 show visits the Countess

A Channel 4 programme on pregnancy and childbirth has recently been filmed at the Countess of Chester Hospital, and the camera crew were lucky enough to catch a birth live on film.

The footage filmed at the Countess will make up one episode of a light hearted six part documentary series entitled 'Sex Education' which is due to be transmitted late September / early October on Channel 4 in the 'How To Look Good Naked' time slot, and the series producers, Endemol, could not have hoped for a better chain of events while they were there.

Part of Endemol's time at the Countess consisted of filming around the Trust's Women & Children's department with the show's presenter Anna Richardson, who has previously presented shows such as Supersize v Super-skinny, Maternity Hospital and You Are What You Eat. Anna chatted with expectant parents and members of staff including Women & Children's Matron, Julie Fogarty who is expected to feature heavily in the final edit due to her informative knowledge and natu-

ral presence in front of the camera.

The team said: "Julie was absolutely fantastic in front of the camera and the production team were well aware that she added so much to the programme with her knowledge and also her sense of humour."

Endemol spent most of their first day filming around the Labour Ward, gaining tips and advice about dealing with pregnancy and childbirth, however their main objective was to film a birth live on camera with some willing participants, and after a long wait of over 20 hours they successfully filmed the birth of Baby Willow who's proud mother, Leanne was more than happy to take part in the programme.

This was a great opportunity to highlight the fantastic work that the Trust's maternity staff do every day and the team from Endemol could not compliment the Trust enough re-



garding our co-operation, generosity and welcoming attitude.

Endemol film crew (left to right): Fabio Cascibetta (Cameraman), Robbie Campbell (Sound), Anna Richardson (Presenter) and Suzy Ratner (Director).

Sharing our knowledge with Kisiizi

In collaboration with Chester University the Trust has established an institutional link with Kisiizi Hospital in Uganda, and the first official team from the Countess visited in July. The team's primary objective was to understand where the Trust are best able to help Kisiizi and where the greatest value can be derived from the link.

This is likely to concentrate on help with peo-

ple and skills rather than gifts and technology as this is the way that Kisiizi Hospital will be able to benefit in a sustainable way.

The link offers a range of benefits to both this Trust and Kisiizi. It will enable us to share skills, knowledge, information and experience with a view to improving the services available to the people of both the communities served. This will be achieved through exchange visits, involving experiential learning, education and practical involvement in the delivery of health care services.

Consultant in Emergency Medicine, Dr John Sloan, who is co-leading the project, said "The enthusiasm shown by many members of the Countess, also backed by Chester University, has been astounding. The scoping team did an excellent job, managing to meet with senior members of the Ugandan Ministry of Health, and working closely with Kisiizi's management. I am sure we will see several meaningful projects emerge, and we hope to publicise these in late October. Subsequently it will be clear how other members of staff can become involved."



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