



Friends of
Moorfields
Eye Hospital

Peacock

The Friends of Moorfields Magazine



Updates from Moorfields
and Friends

National Play in
Healthcare Week

In conversation with
Peter Ridley

Issue 83. Winter.

A note from our Chairman

As we approach the end of the year, it is yet again very satisfying to reflect on how our volunteers have consistently maintained the highest of standards in supporting patients through a variety of different, but equally important roles.

While recognising the incredible performance of our volunteers it would be remiss of me not to mention the support they receive from the Moorfields Eye Hospital clinical staff, and the trust they have placed in them. Trust that has been built up over time. Trust that our volunteers will contribute to the hospital's world-class reputation. It is something we are justifiably proud of.

Whilst celebrating the maintenance of consistently high standards it is also important to stress that we do not stand still. 2025 has seen us build on the success of our health hub, further establish our support for a careers programme and support the development of a programme to promote the



importance of eyecare. As the completion of the new centre draws ever closer the need to adapt and respond to challenges will be heightened. We are ready.

In closing, saying a simple thank you to our volunteers, staff and the wider Moorfields family is, somehow, inadequate. You are deeply appreciated, respected and held in great affection for the work you do and the priceless contribution you make to the wellbeing of patients. On behalf of the Trustees of the Friends of Moorfields, thank you. I hope those of you that celebrate have a wonderful time during the Christmas period and I wish everyone great success and happiness in the New Year.

Tim Hutchings
Chairman of the Board
of Trustees, Friends of
Moorfields

Moorfields updates

Trust excellence

Huge congratulations to Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Trust for being rated the nation's best acute and specialist trust in Q1! This September, Moorfields came out on top of NHS England's assessment of topics such as waiting times, cancer treatment, time spent in A&E, finances and staff satisfaction. We feel incredibly proud to be supporting a trust that excels at patient care together with our wonderful volunteers.



Life-changing eye implant

Moorfields Eye Hospital and senior consultant Mahi Muqit featured on the national news this October about an innovative clinical trial for eye implants, which restored reading vision in 84% of its participants. Once licensed, the innovative technology could give hope to people with an advanced form of dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD), which affects more than 250,000 people in the UK and 5 million people globally.

Permanent chief executive

And last but not least, we are really excited that Peter Riddle has been appointed as Moorfields' permanent chief executive. At Friends of Moorfields, we've enjoyed working with Peter over the past 9 months, and are eager to keep joining forces to ensure the best possible experience for anyone visiting Moorfields.



Friends updates

If you have recently swung by at City Road, you might have noticed some new faces at the Friends office. We've had some staff moves and additions, so here is a little update!

Moving Friends

Many of you will have met Abdul, who has been the face of our Friends shop at City Road since April (time flies!).

He has recently been joined by Joyce, who is supporting him during the busy lunch hours. Joyce has been a volunteer at Friends, both in the shop and as a hand-holder, for over five years. We are excited to have her on the team!



You probably remember Sue from our shop, but she is now one of our volunteer support officers. Based at City Road, she is working alongside Natalia, Liam and Parul to make sure that our volunteer services run smoothly. Sue's days are Mondays to Wednesdays if you'd like to catch her in the office!



Robert recently completed his Eye Care Liaison Officer (ECLO) qualification. Together with Sabina and Julia, he will be supporting patients at City Road and Hoxton at our Health Information Hubs.

New Friends

Parul volunteered with Friends as a hand-holder for two years and has recently joined our volunteer support team. She will regularly be visiting all the various Moorfields sites, making sure that volunteers and staff receive support and are able to speak with someone from our office on a more regular basis. Welcome Parul!



And I'm Paola, the new communications manager. I am really impressed and excited to be spreading the word about the incredible things our volunteers do for Moorfields. Do you have a great Moorfields story you would like us to share on our socials or maybe even in the next Peacock? Drop by in the office or get in touch!

A big thank you to Cathryn, my predecessor, who ran the communications at Friends for the past three years! You did an amazing job capturing the stories of our volunteers and we wish you all the best in your new role!

Play week: The power of play

13 to 18 October was Play in Healthcare Week. It was a special time at Moorfields to celebrate the positive impact play has on the experience of young patients at the Richard Desmond Children's Eye Centre (RDCEC).



Every child has the right to play, and it is vital to their mental health and psychological safety. A report published by Starlight Children's Foundation* during Play in Healthcare Week revealed that on average, almost 40% of young patients are anxious about going to the doctor's, a hospital or a dentist.



The most common fears are around needles and injections, that a procedure might hurt, and not knowing what is happening. Play is a powerful way to reduce or prevent stress caused by these fears.

According to Starlight's report, 78% of children who had the opportunity to play when going for a healthcare appointment felt it was helpful, and so did 71% of parents. It distracted them from what was happening, helped them cope better and trust healthcare professionals more.

** Play In Healthcare Week Report 2025*

Friends and play

Throughout the year, Moorfields' Health Play Specialists provide support to young patients and their families at the RDCEC.

Friends of Moorfields provide regular funds to the RDCEC, which contribute to:

- Salaries of **Play Specialists** who support young patients and their families both in outpatient clinics and in A&E.



- Toys and other interactive equipment across different age groups** to teach young patients about conditions or distract them before and after procedures.
- Special activities** during occasions, such as the Holidays.

For Play Week, we provided photo booths around the clinics, where families could capture some special moments together.



November Lottery

This time, we took to the RDCEC for our Peacock Lottery draw. Thank you to our lovely Play Specialists for your assistance and congratulations to our lucky winners!



Want to take part? Sign up for just £20 per year by emailing moorfields.friends@nhs.net or calling 020 7251 1240. We can also set up an annual standing order via the form on our website.

About our lottery

The Peacock Lottery gives you the chance to contribute to improving the experience of patients and staff at Moorfields - and to win a cash prize.

Half of our lottery income goes into our charity fund, which funds our volunteer services, Play Specialists and other equipment to make hospital visits more pleasant. The remaining 50% goes into the prize pot with three prizes of 60%, 25% and 15% on each draw. We'd love to thank those who generously donated part of their winnings back to us!

Spotlight on: The Health Hub

The Friends of Moorfields Health Information Hub is continuously expanding and improving the services we can offer to patients at Moorfields.



Hoxton hub

This October, we launched our Health Hub in Hoxton. We are supporting patients at this additional site on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between 10am and 4pm.

Learning events

The Health Hub team attended an ECLO seminar in Birmingham this autumn to learn about the latest digital support tools, research, and specific eye conditions, such as Charles Bonnet Syndrome. We also hosted Judith Potts from Esme's Umbrella

at our hub for an awareness event around this condition in November.

Smart glasses

We currently have a demo pair of Ray-Ban Meta glasses at our City Road hub, which use real-time image processing and AI to translate pictures into speech. Come and try them on!

Sight Village

In November, Friends exhibited at Sight Village London, the UK's leading exhibition for the latest assistive technology, products, and services. It was great to learn from other exhibitors and educate patients about the services available to them when they visit Moorfields!



In conversation with...

Peter Ridley

Our chief executive Angela Smith caught up with Peter Ridley, Moorfields' new chief executive. Here's what they chatted about.

Can you tell us a bit about your background and what excites you about being the chief executive at Moorfields?

Yes, of course. I've worked at the NHS almost all of my career: I started in the last century, just to give you a sense of how long it's been!

I originally started out in an accountancy firm, doing things like auditing shipping container companies. It didn't last very long because that didn't really excite me. But when I started in the NHS, I immediately felt part of something important. I started in Croydon, then still called the Mayday

hospital. Since then, I've worked in hospitals in and beyond London: the Royal Marsden, the Royal Free, Portsmouth, Guildford, NHS England, and now I'm here. So my background is very much NHS.

"There's nothing quite like just walking through a hospital. I like working with people who are doing real things for real patients, and who are pushing the boundaries."

At Moorfields we've got the opportunity to not only provide the best care in the country for our patients, but to be that place that everyone comes to for its expertise. There's so much opportunity: from world leading research to the education we offer, we're just always pushing the boundaries. And that's just really exciting to be involved in and part of.

It certainly is! So what are your priorities over the next 12 months?



Well... there's a lot of priorities for the next 12 months. If there's one thing I've learnt at Moorfields, it's that we'll never run out of ideas, opportunities or priorities. Let me describe them in three buckets.

There's the everyday NHS priorities and hospital's performance. It's important we continue to deliver great access for patients, keep reducing our waiting lists, and maintain a high A&E performance. We need to deliver as much care for patients as possible within the financial envelope we've got. This won't get any easier with the current economic situation and pay settlements continue to result in industrial action. This is going to be a priority for the entire NHS for the next 12 months.

Then there's our major programmes. Along with our partners the UCL Institute of Ophthalmology and Moorfields Eye Charity, we're opening our beautiful new centre at St. Pancras in less than two years. I'm confident we'll build it to time and it's going really well to budget. The next 12 months will evolve around how we're going to use the new building and get the most out of it.

We're also putting in place an Electronic Patient Record (EPR) called MoorConnect to update our digital systems. These are two things you wouldn't typically do at the same time and it involves a lot of people to ensure the system works for everyone for years to come.





Then there's priorities that can take the organisation forwards. How can we help leaders across all levels of the organisation develop their leadership skills? How can we invest in getting the best possible culture – whether that's around diversity and inclusion, where we still have a long way to go, or around behaviours and values and making sure we are all working together in the best possible way?

“We want to be an organisation where everyone works together – where everyone feels safe, like they belong and that they're equipped to do their job to the best of their ability.”

Brilliant, thank you. This is definitely exciting. What do you think the opportunities for Moorfields are in light of the NHS 10-year plan?

The 10-year plan fits in nicely with what we're trying to do at

Moorfields, because it's based on three main shifts: moving from hospital care to prevention, from the hospital itself into the community and from analogue into digital.

We're already doing a lot of work in the digital space, such as investigating the use of digital systems to help patients get to the right place for their first appointment, and research around artificial intelligence and using algorithms to make sure we give patients the treatment they need when they need it.

Then there's our community model: we are putting diagnostics centres up to be as close to people as possible. We work out of 20 centres in and around London and are excited to work out what the next logical step is to better support our communities, in particular underserved communities.

And prevention is something we do. We know that if you can get the appropriate investigations early enough, you can diagnose future eye problems and recognise underlying conditions. In short, it feels like we are perfectly placed.

I think we need to grasp the opportunity to just go for it. And let's bring in as many partners in this space as possible and be really open and generous about taking it forward – because it's deeply exciting.

That's a nice segway into saying how can Friends of Moorfields help support you and your team moving forward in delivering all of this?

In so many ways! The support we get from Friends is crucial to what we do. Some people will experience you through the greeters at the front at a number of our sites, but there's a lot more to welcoming people into the organisation



than directing them around the hospital. Friends are supporting people who might be here at a point in their life of deep uncertainty and anxiety. I know about the work the volunteers do to help people in those difficult situations, give some support, and spend time with them in a way that sometimes we can't in busy clinics. It's just really important.

“I don't quite know how we'd replace Friends if we ever had to. To be honest, I don't think we could.”

And then there's the move to our new building, which is going to cause some confusion as it will be new to staff and patients. Friends are helping us design exactly how patients will find their way around the centre before we move into the building, but your support in getting us through particularly those first 12 months will also be important. I think you can really help people feel excited about the new building, ensure they don't get lost and put them at ease that they'll be cared for in the way that they're used to at Moorfields.

In memory of Jan Kuszlewicz



Jan was an active volunteer for the Friends of Moorfields at our Moorfields Bedford site from July 2019 until his passing in April 2025.

As a volunteer Jan was an integral part of the team, acting as a hand-holder to patients having operations and supporting us as a charity through his mentorship of new volunteers, and helping us recruit new volunteers within the community.

Kind, patient, and supportive Jan was an extremely popular volunteer with patients, his peers and Moorfields staff which led to him winning the Moorfields STARS awards Volunteer of The Year in 2023.



Jan's contributions to volunteering were exceptional and as a charity we feel proud and honoured to have known him and have him represent our organisation. His presence will be missed by Moorfields and his local community in Bedford.

Thank you!

The work we do wouldn't be possible without people like you. Whether you make a one-off donation or give regularly, your contribution helps us do more to support the patients and staff at Moorfields. Thank you!

Here's a shout out to **Elisabeth** for donating to Friends as a wedding gift to a happy couple, **Hoxton Opticians** who came together and raised funds for us, and a very special thank you to **Ting Kit** for funding an innovative **DREAM OCT™** retinal imaging device.

The **DREAM OCT™** makes highly detailed images of the back of the eye, improving speed and accuracy.

This is the third device Ting Kit has generously donated to Moorfields and we cannot thank her enough for enabling the trust to offer patients the best possible eye care.





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**Thank you to Moorfields
Eye Charity who generously
contribute towards the funding
of our Volunteer Service.**



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