



Friends of
Moorfields
Eye Hospital

Peacock

The Friends of Moorfields Magazine



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the highlights

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our Oriel volunteers

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patient no one talks about

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Moorfields at St. Ann's

Issue 84. Spring.

A note from our chairman

At our recent AGM I spoke about the importance of working with 'good people' and, in doing so, acknowledged our fantastic volunteers, our professional and dedicated staff team and our committed Board of Trustees. I might also have acknowledged the fact that our success was based on the sound foundations laid down by a great many people over many years; a fact that was brought home to me shortly afterwards when I was invited to attend the funeral of Nina Laidlaw, who like her daughter Emma, was a past Chairman and a magnificent supporter of The Friends of Moorfields Hospital.

I never had the opportunity to meet Nina but, after listening to the Eulogy presented by her son, Sam, I very much wish I had. She was clearly quite a person, squeezing everything she could out of her 102 years. Apart from devoting time to family, friends, a career and supporting others it is remarkable that she also found time to devote some of her

energies to the Friends.

We should all be grateful and I was pleased to pass on the thanks of the Friends for her, and Emma's, valuable support.

As we continue to build upon support we offer I am aware of the responsibility we have to continue our fantastic work. As we all know, life never stands still and change is inevitable. Change will present us with challenges as we prepare for the move to Oriel but, thankfully, we have an organisation that is built on solid foundations and we certainly have no shortage of good people to help us. Thanks to our supporters, past and present, I have every confidence that we will successfully overcome these challenges.

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



Updates at Friends

As we keep expanding our services, some in the team have taken on a new role! Here's what's changed.

Oriel Delivery Manager

Liam will be managing all things Oriel and ensuring we prepare our services for the needs at the new centre.



Youth Engagement Manager

Nimita will be in charge of our work experience programme for young people across the trust.



Finance Manager

Our own **Nathania** has stepped into Nimita's role as **finance manager**.

We are also in the process of on-boarding two new colleagues to take over Liam's and Nathania's previous roles. Find out more about our two new faces in the next issue!



Congratulations to our lovely colleagues and we're excited about the opportunities this extra capacity will bring to keep improving how we serve different communities.

Our 2026 AGM

the highlights

Thank you to all of you who were able to attend our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Monday 26 January. It was a great event to celebrate the successes of 2025 and take a moment to look forward to 2026. Here are some highlights of the afternoon.

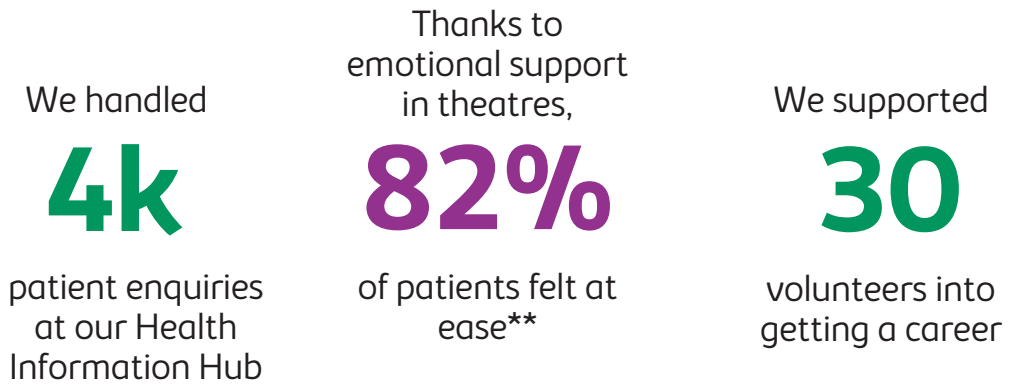
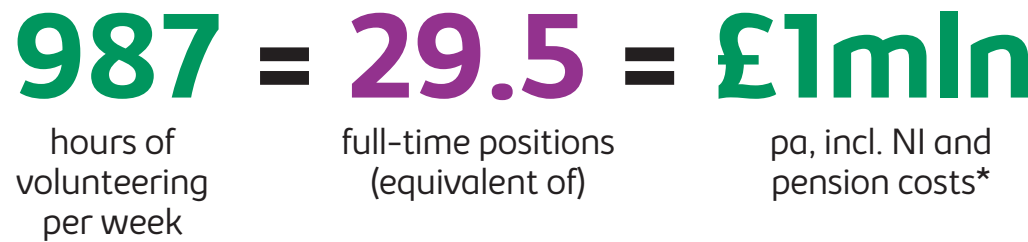


We were joined by our guest speakers **Dr. Karla Dias**, former volunteer and now doctor at Moorfields, **Dhanes Thomas** and **Laura Brewster** from the Oriel programme team, and **Peter Ridley**, chief executive of Moorfields Eye Hospital. Our reports were presented by our chairman **Tim Hutchings**, our treasurer **Neil Ashcroft**, and chief executive **Angela Smith**. We also had the pleasure of recognising many of our volunteers for their long service!

Our year in numbers

2025 was a great year for Friends. We're in a good position to keep expanding our services to support patient experience at Moorfields.

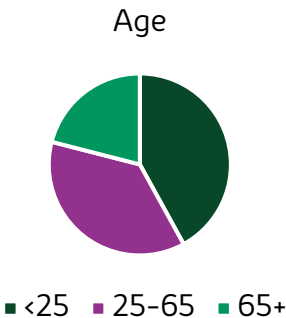
In 2025, our volunteers provided the trust with:



A diverse volunteer force



Asian	40%
White	29%
Black	16%
Mixed	2%
Other	6%
Not disclosed	7%



* If volunteers were paid the lowest NHS 'Agenda for Change' pay band of £14.07p/h (including high-cost area allowance).

** Based on over 500 patients surveyed about their experience in the wards and operating theatres, half of which were supported by a volunteer and half of which were not.

Spotlight on...

our Oriel volunteers

Work on Moorfields and UCL Centre for Eye Health (Oriel) in St Pancras, Camden, is progressing well and the centre will welcome its first patients in summer 2027.

All services at Moorfields Eye Hospital City Road, the children's services and Moorfields Private on Bath Street, will move to the new centre.

Our volunteers are supporting the Oriel programme team to help transition our staff, students, and patients to the new site. They will be out and about in clinics at City Road, sharing key information with patients. This will include information about how to get to the new site and what facilities will be available.

The team will also encourage patients to take part in other engagement activities, including wayfinding, and digital services. We're keen to



hear feedback from as many patients as possible to help us create a centre that is accessible for all.

Our Oriel volunteers are vital to the relocation, and will continue to provide support once we've moved in. We asked a few of you to share your thoughts about the move and role of volunteers.

What made you want to become an Oriel volunteer?

Kiran: "I've been volunteering with Friends for five years and have a background in project engineering. I was part of another large move, so I got really excited when I heard about Oriel."

Ian: “I have an eye condition myself and understand how important it is for the first experience with an unfamiliar place to be a positive one. Volunteers are key to creating that positive environment and that is great to be involved in.”

What are Oriel volunteers working on right now and how does it help patients?

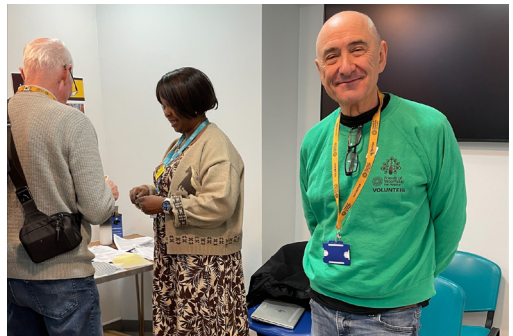
Kiran: “We want everything to go as smoothly as possible, so we need to make patients aware of the move and collect their feedback at these early stages. It will make everyone’s life easier once we move.”

Ian: “There is something extraordinary about Moorfields, because volunteers get involved across the patient experience. It’s a complex transition, and having trained volunteers in place will help communicate updates clearly.”

What excites you most about volunteering at the new centre?

Kiran: “A new environment will present challenges and it’s a joint responsibility – Moorfields, UCL, the charities and all others involved – to make sure we leave a good first impression. But we are ready for it!”

Ian: “Whether you’re staff, a patient or volunteer, there is an emotional attachment to this hospital. We get to be part of preserving the spirit of Moorfields, but also in taking things forward. There are so many opportunities!”



If you would like to find out more about the new centre, visit the Oriel page on the Moorfields website or email moorfields.oriel@nhs.net to sign up to the newsletter.

If you are a volunteer and would like to get involved as an Oriel volunteer, get in touch with Liam Bays, Oriel Project Delivery Manager (liam.bays@nhs.net).

The future of eye care: the patient no one talks about

When we talk about the future of eye care, we often think about research labs, the latest equipment and brand-new treatments – which are key to progress. But the best breakthroughs are also about people.

The wonderful Dr. Karla Dias has been with Moorfields for 7 years: 1 year as a volunteer and 6 as a doctor. Friends caught up with her about her background, how breakthroughs happen, and the future of eye care at Moorfields.

Can you tell us a little bit about your specialisation in eye care and your journey at Moorfields?

Thank you very much for inviting me. It's always a pleasure to speak with the Friends! I'm an ophthalmologist with a particular interest in complex anterior segment disease and structural complications. My work focuses on patients whose eyes have lost their normal pressure and structural integrity. This can happen after surgery, inflammation or eye trauma.



My journey at Moorfields has been deeply formative. It began not only as a clinician, but also as a volunteer. As a volunteer I started with welcoming patients at the front. I would help them check in, guide them, and be there for them if they had questions.

“This experience shaped the type of doctor that I am today.”

When you sit next to a patient as a volunteer, you hear different things about their fears of losing independence, their frustrations,

and their hopes that someone might look at their case differently. And that perspective has always stayed with me.

At Moorfields, we work at this intersection of clinical excellence, research and compassion. I'm very grateful to have always been given the time to talk to patients, even when I'm in a very busy clinic.

Your relationship with Friends has recently gone full circle, as you are part of the team that was on the news about a new treatment funded by Moorfields Eye Charity, which Angela Smith, our chief executive, received as well. What is hypotony and how does the treatment help patients like Angela?

It's been a great pleasure to be able to treat her! Hypotony is a condition in which the pressure inside of the eye becomes abnormally low. When this happens, the eye can collapse structurally, leading to distorted vision, changes in the retina, discomfort, and in severe cases, irreversible sight loss.

Low eye pressure is not just a

number for many patients. It means blurred vision, fluctuation in the vision, difficulty reading, driving, recognising faces, and dealing with the emotional impact of limited options.

The treatment we developed involves injections inside of the eye with a gel-like substance that provides internal structural support. Rather than trying to increase the pressure by injecting liquid in the front part of the eye, this approach focuses on restoring the eye's architecture from within, which can ultimately improve visual function.

“For patients like Angela, it represents a shift from ‘there is nothing that we can do’ to ‘there may be a way to help’.”



Can you talk a bit more about how the treatment came about?

Innovation begins with listening carefully to what's not working. Conventional hypotony treatments aim to correct underlying causes. However, in some patients the eye's structure remains unstable.

When patients continue to have hope and ask whether there is another possibility, it challenges us as clinicians to look beyond established pathways.

“Innovation is often co-created with patients.”

The HPMC gel we use actually has long been used safely in ophthalmology, but the idea to use the gel to treat hypotony emerged from listening to a patient who was losing her vision. Mr. Petrushkin wanted to try everything he could to stop this from happening.

What role does addressing unmet needs, and the effort around rare diseases, play in driving innovation?

Rare and underrepresented



conditions often receive less attention in research because they affect smaller populations. Yet for an individual patient, the impact is profound. When there is no treatment, no trial and limited literature, we must think more creatively and more collaboratively as clinicians.

At Moorfields, we work as a team: with patients, multiple clinics and different consultants and colleagues, who always have something to add. I'm respected for being unique and Mr. Petrushkin is respected for having his ideas.

Being a voice for the patient that no one talks about means recognising that equity is not only about access.

“Equity is about ensuring that uncommon conditions are not dismissed and unsolvable simply because they are uncommon.”



Historically, some of the most transformative medicine began with rarer and challenging cases that forced us to think differently. When we allow lived experience to guide research priorities, innovation becomes concrete and purposeful.

The hypotony treatment is a good example. It began with a relatively small number of patients with a significant unmet need. But once you explore a solution, its principles may extend to broader applications.

If you had to name one thing, what excites you most about innovation at Moorfields?

If I had to put it into one word, it's 'mindset'. At Moorfields, there is a culture that allows clinicians and scientists to question

assumptions. This environment, together with the exceptional research infrastructure, multidisciplinary collaboration, and many incredible people working here, creates the space for meaningful change.

Kindness and innovation are not separate concepts.

“The future of eye care is not only about new devices and molecules; it’s about the human drive to change the outcomes for patients who feel forgotten or unseen.”

That moment that the patient who has been told for years ‘that nothing can be done’, hears ‘there may be something we can try’, that’s when true progress starts.

A true community:

Moorfields at St. Ann's

Moorfields operates out of 20 different centres, and each and every one of these is unique. Friends are present at 10 sites, but we're always looking to expand our operations to better support staff and patients. This March we took a peek behind the scenes at St. Ann's, during a World Glaucoma Week awareness event.

What makes St. Ann's special? When you walk through the doors, it instantly feels like a community; it's a welcoming environment with lovely and

approachable staff, and personal touches such as artwork by a patient in the hallway.

St. Ann's is proof of how kindness and excellence shape patient experience. A survey conducted in October and December 2025 found 96% of patients would recommend St. Ann's to anyone who needs similar care, and 100% would recommend the centre for surgery.

Patients at St. Ann's can get cataract, glaucoma and medical retina treatments, including surgery. Despite being a smaller site, it's very busy; the team see about 200 patients a day on average.

Everyone goes out of their way to put patients at ease and guide them to and from their seat. But there isn't always enough time for those who need more. When we asked staff what could make the St. Ann's experience even better, they all agreed: regular volunteers!



“Volunteers are key in improving the patient flow, but also in building community: a chat whilst you’re waiting can make all the difference.”



The sense of community is something close to heart for the staff at St. Ann’s. When their colleague Gino suddenly passed away in 2024, the team led an initiative to plant a community garden to remember him. Friends funded a memorial bench and some additional tables to help create an outdoor space to support the staff’s wellbeing.

Wellbeing goes beyond the here and now. As much as our volunteers support staff, volunteering

itself can also be a form of support, meeting new people and building community. We spoke to a colleague at St. Ann’s, who was keen to give back to the trust to develop new skills.

“I was a technician for 3 years and then moved into an admin role. But I like learning and getting skilled in different areas. Volunteering offers that opportunity.”

We’re excited to keep providing opportunities to connect patients, staff and the general public at St. Ann’s and through Moorfields in general!

Do you want to support this wonderful site as a volunteer or are you a staff member wanting to volunteer? Get in touch with our office!



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!

Congratulations to our lottery winners

This quarter's draw was done by the lovely team at St. Ann's! The next draw will be in June.

The Peacock Lottery gives you the chance to contribute to improving the experience of patients and staff at Moorfields. Want to take part? Visit our website or contact our office to sign up for just £20 per year and have a chance of winning a cash prize every quarter!



Thank you for your support

We want to express our deepest gratitude to **Nina Laidlaw** for her commitment to Friends, and her daughter **Emma**, who raised funds in her memory.

Also many thanks to our lovely and creative **Moorfields Eye Hospital colleagues in HR**, who fundraised for us during their Christmas party.



And a special thanks to Moorfields at Bedford

We would like to say a really big thank you to our lovely volunteer Lynne at Bedford who helped raise a cheque for the paediatric clinic at Moorfields at Bedford!

The cheque enabled Lynne and senior nurse Natalie to look at putting together Worry Worms for young patients. These are small, handmade toys that patients can hold when they feel anxious or stressed, giving them comfort, confidence and control when things around them seem unfamiliar.



But it takes more than funding to make initiatives like this happen. We would like to say an enormous thanks to members of the community of Bedfordshire for taking the time to crochet over 100 Worry Worms!





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of our Volunteer Service.**



**Moorfields
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